Messages

OF

HOPE and FAITH.

NEW SERMONS

BY

REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

WITH A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE

By S. P. SPRENG.

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PREFACE.

We need offer no apology for this book. Its usefulness and timeliness will become apparent to everyone who reads its pages, containing as they do the ripest thoughts and latest utterances of the foremost preacher of our times. There is food here for the head and especially for the heart. Preachers are given an opportunity to study the methods of a model preacher, and our people will find spiritual food in abundance for their souls — "milk for the babes, and strong meat for them that are of age." Here is comfort for the afflicted, instruction for the seeker after truth, and help for all who are striving after godliness. These sermons are indeed

"MESSAGES OF HOPE AND FAITH."

The "Life of Spurgeon" which forms the closing portion of the book will also be found interesting. It is another illustration of the familiar lines:

"Lives of great men all remind us,
We can make our lives sublime."

In its compilation we have drawn largely from Geo. C. Needham's "Life and Labors of C. H. Spur-

geon," and "Stevenson's Life of Spurgeon", besides various other sources.

The book is issued as a premium to the readers and subscribers of the EVANGELICAL MESSENGER for 1890, and as such we commend it to our many readers, with the confidence that it will prove a lasting blessing to all who procure it and read it.

With a prayer to God for His blessing upon this effort to contribute something to the spread of Gospel truth, we send forth these "MESSAGES OF HOPE AND FAITH," humbly trusting that they will brighten the hope and strengthen the faith of every one who reads them.

S. P. S.

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MESSAGES OF HOPE AND FAITH.

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REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

1.

LIFE'S WRECKAGE RECOVERED.

TEXT—"*And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten.*" *Joel 2:25.*

THE FRUITS OF WASTED YEARS.—RECOVERED BY LARGER GRACE —I. THE LOCUST-EATEN YEARS.—WHAT KIND OF YEARS THEY ARE.—DEAD YEARS OF SIN.—OF UNPROFITABLE LABOR.—OF DISAPPOINTMENT.—OF FRUITLESSNESS.—OF DOUBT AND DEPRESSION.—OF A LOW STATE OF GRACE.—OF BACKSLIDING. —II. LOCUST-EATEN YEARS RESTORED.—REPENTANCE THE FIRST CONDITION.—MARY MAGDALENE'S YEARS.—SORROW BRINGING FRUIT IN POWER TO COMFORT.—III. WHAT IS TO COME OF IT.—SATISFACTION.—COMMUNION.—ANOINTING.—THE LOCUSTS BLOWN AWAY.—

LOST years can never be restored literally. Time once passed is gone forever. Let no man make any mistake about this, or trifle with the present moment under any notion that the flying hour will ever wing its way back to him. As well recall the north wind, or fill again the emptied rain-cloud, or put back into their quiver the arrows of the lord of day. As well bid the river which has hastened onward to the sea, bring back its rolling floods, as imagine that the years that have once gone can ever be restored to us. It will strike you at once that the locusts did not eat the years: the locusts ate the fruits of the years' labor, the harvests of the fields; so that the meaning of the

restoration of the years must be the restoration of those fruits and of those harvests which the locusts consumed. You cannot have back your time; but there is a strange and wonderful way in which God can give back to you the wasted blessings, the unripened fruits of years over which you mourned.

FRUITS OF WASTED YEARS

may yet be yours. It is a pity that they should have been locust-eaten by your folly and negligence; but if they have been so, be not hopeless concerning them. "All things are possible to him that believeth." There is a power which is beyond all things, and can work great marvels. Who can make the all-devouring locust restore his prey? No man, by wisdom or power, can recover what has been utterly destroyed. God alone can do for you what seems impossible; and here is the promise: "I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten."

By giving to His repentant people larger harvests than the land could naturally yield, God could give back to them, as it were, all they would have had if the locusts had never come; and God, by giving you larger grace in the present and in the future, can make the life which has hitherto been blighted, and eaten up with the locusts, and the caterpillar, and the palmer-worm of sin and self and Satan, yet to be a complete and blessed and useful life, to His praise and glory. It is a great wonder; but Jehovah is a God of wonders, and in the kingdom of His grace miracles are common things.

We shall go into this subject, which I think must be

very full of interest to those here present who have wasted years to mourn over, since they have hitherto done nothing for God, nor even for themselves. The locust hath eaten everything. The prospect of recovering the wreckage of a life must be of interest to them.

I. I shall first speak upon

LOCUST-EATEN YEARS.

Years which the locust hath eaten: what sort of years are these? Well, first and darkest of all, there are *the dead years of sin*, of unregeneracy, impenitence, and unbelief. Without God, and without Christ, without life as to spiritual things! What a condition to be in! Oh, how many, many years have some passed in this horrible state! We all of us—those of us with whom God has dealt very graciously—always feel sorry that even our most early days should have been spent in sin. I was brought to know the Lord when I was fifteen years of age, and I have often said that I could wish I had known Him fifteen years before. Oh that one could from the very earliest openings of one's eyes have seen the light of the Eternal! But yet I fear me there are very many to whom the idea of conversion in boyhood and youth seems almost too good a thing to be true, for they have now reached thirty, forty, fifty years of age, and are still unreconciled, unrenewed. I could weep over you! We frequently meet with people older still, whose many years have all been graceless, locust-eaten years. Ah me! how sad to be old and unsaved, feeble with age, and yet without strength unto God!

LABOR LOST.

Now, remember that eating of the locust—that devouring of everything by the caterpillars—meant *a laborious year*, because that year the people ploughed and sowed, and watched their crops; although the labor was all in vain. So, he that does nothing for God, and has no spiritual blessing, yet has to work and to labor. None toil harder then those who are the slaves of lust, pleasure, self, and Satan. These people often labor as in the very fire. The way of transgressors is hard. They have to toil and slave, and tug and strive; for the yoke of the world is not easy, and its burden is not light. But nothing comes of it; and this is the gall of the bitterness. One does not mind working when there is good reward for it; but to plough and sow, and then to reap nothing, because the locust hath eaten it—this is misery!

The locust year was particularly

A YEAR OF DISAPPOINTMENT.

They looked for a harvest; in fact, they seemed to see it spring up, and then it was devoured before their eyes. Even so the ungodly man, the man who has no faith in Christ, is often charmed with the prospect of a happiness which he never reaches. A little more, and he will be content. He gets a little more; and this increases his thirst for yet another draught from the golden cup. Run as we may, when the heart shoots with its far-reaching bow, still the arrows are beyond us. The student must know a little more; the ambitious must climb a little higher upon the ladder of honor, and then he will be at ease. He learns,

he reaches the honor; but the ease is still as distant as ever—perhaps it is even further off.

And, alas! *they are fruitless years.* O sirs, what have some of you ever done in this world yet? I heard of one who had made a half a million of money, and he died, and a Christian man said, "Now, I call that man's life

A DEAD FAILURE.

What has the man done? He has accumulated what he could not enjoy. He has scraped it together, and he has made no use of it whatever." Such persons remind me of jackdaws who will hoard I know not what—all kinds of treasures and trash; and what do they do but hide them in a hole behind the door? They cannot do anything with them. They have no sense to use them: whether they steal the abbot's ring or a bit of wire, it is all the same to jackdaws; and to misers, what can be the difference between a thousand pounds or a thousand pins, since they use neither? Alas! many have the power to get, but have not the faculty to use what they have gotten. Their years are eaten with the locust.

Now, very briefly let me mention that there is another sense in which the text can be used. There are some whose years have been eaten by the locust, through great dolor, and depression, and disappointment. They remember those happy days of springtide when they greatly rejoiced in God; but by some means they dropped their confidence, and lost their hope; their sky was darkened, and the wintry winds of despair howled around them. I am grieved for

dear friends on whom the chill of long depression has fallen with terrible power. I frequently meet with these sons and daughters of melancholy, and my sorrow is that I am so often unable to deal wisely with them. Prisoners who have been immured till it almost seemed that the moss would grow on their eye-lids, have yet been set free. Do not utterly despair, for here stands this gracious promise: "I will restore unto you the years which the locust hath eaten." God can give you back all those years of sorrow, and you shall yet be the better for them. You shall have to thank God for all this sadness of heart. It is

A STRANGE STORY

that I tell you. Peradventure you will not believe me, but you shall live to see it true: God will grind sunlight for you out of your black nights: in yonder oven of affliction grace will prepare the bread of delight. I said this to a friend with whom I have often conversed—an earnest Christian woman, who for three years had defied all attempt to comfort her. We had prayed with her. Her godly, gracious husband, a minister of Christ, had laid out his heart to cheer her, but she had refused to be comforted; and yet, to my great joy, the other day I received a letter saying, "The Lord has opened the gates of my dungeon. My captivity has ended; and though I am sick in body, that does not matter, for I am restored in spirit." Yes, the Lord *can* loose the captives, and He does it. There are dear children of God who have been ten or twenty years the victims of despair, to whom, nevertheless, this promise has, in the full-

ness of time, been fulfilled, "I will restore unto you the years which the locust hath eaten."

And now, having given you those two versions of the text, let me give you another. I speak of those whose years have been wasted by their low state of grace. Many Christians are

BARELY CHRISTIANS.

We may not be judges of our brethren; but if some professors are Christians, it is in a very small way. They seem to be like Hosea's "silly dove," without heart. I do not judge them: but I look at them with pitying wonder. How can they be content to be such useless things? How can they be satisfied to be so neutral, so double-minded, when all around them the stern conflict rages? I wish they would give us a little more evidence upon which to judge whether they are for us or for our enemies. The years which the locust hath eaten in some professors are far too many; and I would carnestly exhort any brother here who has had the locusts at him for a long time, and remind him that the promise stands, if he will avail himself of it, "I will restore unto you the years that the locust hath eaten." It is high time that he saw to it, for his case is a bad one. It is ill to be trading so ill, when a merchandise so precious as time is being lost.

Once more only, lest by these varied instances I should weary you. There are some in whom their years have been eaten up by the locusts in

OPEN BACKSLIDING.

This is one of the plagues of the church of God.

Alas, for the many who did run well, but have suddenly stopped, and run no longer in the divine road! This is our frequent sorrow, even to heartbreak. We believe in the perseverance of the saints, but many are not saints, and therefore do not persevere. Nominal saints exhibit no final perseverance. Saints who have only the name of saints last but for a time, and then die away. In too many the life of God rather lingers than grows: their religion is so very weakly that they exhibit rather the sign of disease than of health. They wander away from their Lord and Master because they do not sufficiently feel His attractive power. Oh, that the Lord would be gracious in restoring such wanderers! Do I address any who have almost given up attendance on the means of grace? God have mercy upon you! Come and receive His restoring mercy. He will not cast you away, but He bids me say to you, that if you turn to Him according to the teaching of this chapter, He will yet restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten. It is a great wonder; but you shall see it, if you will seek the Lord yet again.

II. What does God say? "I will restore unto you the years that the locust hath eaten." This is our second head:

LOCUST-EATEN YEARS RESTORED.

Notice, this is divine work, "I will restore unto you the years that the locust hath eaten." *You* cannot get them back. Nobody can give them back to you. But the omnipotent Jehovah says, "I will restore them to you." Can you believe that? All things are possible

with God. Those dead years, those doleful years, those desponding years, those idle years, those backsliding years—all the harvests of them God can give them back to you. Look away from yourself and trust in the miracle-working God, while you hear this promise, "I will restore unto you the years which the locust hath eaten."

But notice that this restoration follows upon a true and genuine repentance. Repent, then. This is the great teaching and operation of the Gospel at its commencement upon the heart. "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you," is its first cry from the wilderness. "Turn ye every man from his evil ways." "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die, O house of Israel?" To go on in impenitence is to miss the blessing of my text. To go on in spiritual deadness—to go on in backsliding—will never bring the restoration of lost years. But he that shall unfeignedly confess his sin, shall heartily hate it, and shall turn unto God through Jesus Christ, trusting in the precious blood of His atonement, shall receive the unspeakably precious benediction of the Lord, the Restorer. Such a man shall plead this promise with God, and have it graciously fulfilled to him: "I will restore unto you the years that the locust hath eaten." It is a very remarkable promise, but you see to whom it is given.

This promise is only fulfilled by the exceeding grace of God; and it shall be my business for a minute to show you how the grace of God works it out. We take, for instance, a man or a woman who has been living for many

YEARS IN KNOWN SIN.

Those years have all been wasted. How can God give us back the fruit of those wasted years? He can. He can. Seest thou that woman? She is a sinner, a common sinner of the town. She has spent her days, her nights, in wantonness. She comes into the room where the Saviour lies reclining at the dinner-table, and His feet are not far from the door. She bears a choice box of ointment; she has, besides that, eyes full of tears, and she stands behind Him weeping. She washes His feet with those tears. She loosens the luxuriant tresses of her head, those nets in which she had entangled many a living soul, and she bows down, and wipes those feet which with her tears she washed. While she kisses them with her lips, she wipes them with her hair. Now, that woman, in that day, had through grace restored to her the years which the locust had eaten. And you, too, my hearer, though you may have been so many years a sinner, can yet be so transformed as to overtake the saints. God can give you such a true repentance, such a burning love, such an enthusiastic consecration, that during the rest of your days you shall make up for all those wasted years.

I will suppose the locust has eaten many years by your being in great sorrow: and I believe that the Lord can easily make up to you.

THE WEAR AND FRET OF GRIEF

are great, but there is a remedy. Have I not seen some that have passed through years of deep soul-distress, who have been all their lifetime much the

better for it? They have been more able to sympathize with poor, tried saints. They have had a truer, deeper, richer experience; and, as a rule, they have known the Gospel of Christ better, and they have had a tenderer love to Him who brought them up out of the horrible pit, and out of the miry clay. Personally I have been much the gainer by my sad hours and my sick-days. Your ills may become wells of comfort for others. The Lord can bring so much good out of the evil, so much light out of the darkness, so much joy out of the sorrow, that you shall one day say, "I thank God that I was shut up in Doubting Castle. I thank God I did sink in the deep mire where there was no standing, for He has restored to me the years that the locust hath eaten."

And if, again, the locust has eaten up your years through your being cold and indifferent and idle, God can recover you from this sad mischief. He will give you to repent bitterly of this great sin; for a great sin it is to lose a moment which should be used for Jesus. But yet, if the Lord shall visit you with an intense hatred of such idleness, and sting you into action, and at the same time draw you by the cords of love into full consecration, you will, perhaps, by redoubled zeal, recover the lost seasons. Oh that God would make it so with those who hitherto have sadly loitered in the race! Oh that our smouldering logs would become flaming firebrands! Oh that our sluggards could be aroused into enthusiasts!

Do not invite the locusts to come, I pray you, in the hope of getting back that which they devour. No,

no; no—a thousand times NO. We do not want the locusts at all: we cannot endure sin, or doubt, or trifling. We want every year to be fruitful—fruitful with a hundred-fold increase. But if the evils have come, let us turn to God with penitence and faith, and He can yet restore to us the losses they have caused.

III. I have done, when I have said just a word or two upon a third point. Here are locust-eaten years, and here are these locust-eaten years restored: and now,

WHAT IS TO COME OF IT?

If God restores to us the years that the locust hath eaten, He has done a great deal for us; but notice that He is able to do yet more, and will do it, for what doth He say? He says, in the twenty-sixth verse, "And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed." What a promise! You half-starved professors—you that are moping and mourning, who rise from the tables of the world unsatisfied, devoured with a griping hunger—if you turn to God with full purpose of heart, He will feed you with heavenly bread, and give you as real enjoyment as ever He gave to the best of His people. What shall come of it? Why, this shall come of it—that you who have had the most to mourn over shall be among the loudest singers. You shall praise the name of the Lord your God that hath dealt wondrously with you. You will cry, with tears running down your cheeks, "Who is a God like unto Thee, passing by transgression,

iniquity, and sin?" I was a sinner up to the neck in filth; a despairing soul shut up in the densest darkness; but He has washed me, and He has brought me out into the light, and put a new song into my mouth. He is a glorious God—this God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I pray you may have intense enjoyment of His marvellous grace, and may pour forth your whole souls in His praise.

Next, you shall have most clear and sweet communion with God. Hear what the prophet further says, "And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel and that I am the Lord your God, and none else, and My people shall never be ashamed." Wonderful! wonderful! that a far-off, outcast sinner should know his covenant God, and should say, "He is my God," and should enter into fellowship with Him, and should enjoy all the privileges of a friend of God. Wonderful that all his fear should be gone, and that he should instead be full of holy confidence, and have a right to hold up his head and never be ashamed! It shall be so, dear hearer. True repentance shall bring rest.

And then, best of all, the

ANOINTING SHALL COME

upon you. I hope that the Lord has some here, at this hour, who did not know Him when they came within these walls, who, at this time, shall be called by His grace, and before long shall begin to tell to others what the Lord has done for them. O Lord, find ministers among these miserable sinners! Raise up for Thyself witnesses from among these careless

youths! May the locusts all be blown away by a strong north wind, and never darken the air again! May these wasted years all be given back to you, and may you become the Lord's living, loving servants from this time forth. Oh, for the highest form of spiritual life! Oh, for the greatest possible usefulness! Oh, for grace to fill out our poor shrivelled lives till they arrive at a heavenly fullness! Oh, for the sacred breath of God to fill out all the canvas of our capacity! Lord, the sail flaps; the boat scarcely moves; we lie becalmed in indolence! Send us a breeze, we pray Thee. Grant us the wind of Thy Spirit to fill out every sail, that we may fly over the waves. Amen.

II.

THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL.

TEXT—"*The Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ.*" *2 Cor. 4:4.*

PAUL'S PERCEPTION OF THE GLORY OF THE GOSPEL.—THE ONE THING WORTH LIVING FOR.—WHAT PREVENTS MEN SEEING IT.—I. PAUL'S NAME FOR THE GOSPEL.—A GOSPEL OF THE GLORY OF CHRIST.—OF HIS PERSON—OF HIS LOVE.—OF HIS INCARNATION.—OF HIS SACRIFICE.—OF HIS RESURRECTION.—OF HIS SECOND COMING.—II. THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL.—A LIGHT UNVEILED.—DIVINE.—REVEALING.—PHOTOGRAPHIC.—JOY-IMPARTING.—III. WHAT TO DO WITH THE LIGHT.—LOOK TOWARDS IT.—SEE ALL THINGS BY IT.—VALUE IT.—KEEP CHRIST ALWAYS IN THE FRONT.

SHINING in the centre of the verse, like a pearl in its setting, you find these words. Literally and accurately translated, they run thus: "The light of the gospel of the glory of Christ." This is the form given to my text in the Revised Version, and I shall follow it, because it, word for word, follows the original.

Paul was a man of one idea. The Gospel of Christ had saturated his soul, as the dew saturated Gideon's fleece. He could think of nothing else, and speak of nothing else, but the glory of Christ crucified. Important events in politics transpired in the apostle's day, but I cannot remember an allusion to them. Great social problems were to be solved, but his one and only solution was the preaching of that great Saviour who is to cleanse the Augean stables of the world. For Paul there was

BUT ONE THING WORTH LIVING FOR,

and that one thing was worth dying for. He saw most clearly the glory of his Lord, and that precious

Gospel which is built up thereon, and he marvelled that others could not see it also. Considering their case with care, he sorrowfully perceived that they must first have shut their eyes by wilful unbelief, and that, therefore, Satan had exercised his evil power, and had utterly blinded them. The blaze of the Gospel is so bright that, even with their eyes averted, some measure of light must have entered their minds, unless some special evil power had operated to hold them in darkness. The devil himself must have blinded them, and even he found it a great task to shut out the glorious light, and to accomplish it he had to assume all his power as "the god of this world."

I wonder whether there are any here at this time who have long been willing unbelievers, and have at last come to be quite unable to perceive any glory in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus. When they hear it faithfully preached, they flippantly criticise the style of the speaker; but the matter of which he speaks appears to them to be of small consequence. They pass by the cross itself, and the sorrow of the Lord is nothing to them. These may be very intelligent men and women in other matters, and yet have no perception of spiritual truth. I pray that while I am speaking of the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, that light may penetrate their minds.

I. At the outset, let us consider

PAUL'S NAME FOR THE GOSPEL:

"the Gospel of the glory of Christ." It is very evident that the apostle felt that the Gospel was solely

and altogether of Christ. The Anointed was, in his view, the one object of the glad tidings, from beginning to end. When He was born, the angels proclaimed good tidings of great joy to the sons of men; and after His death, His human messengers went forth to all nations with messages of love. His death is the birth of our hope; His resurrection is the rising of our buried joy; His session at the right hand of God is the prophecy of our eternal bliss. Christ is the author of the Gospel, the subject of the Gospel, and the end of the Gospel. His hand is seen in every letter of that wonderful epistle of divine love called the New Testament, or New Covenant. He, Himself, is glad tidings to us in every point, and the Gospel is from Him in every sense. That is not gospel which does not relate to Jesus.

The glory of the Gospel, then, lies very much in the glory of our Lord's person. This is the Gospel—that the Son of God Himself gloriously undertook the salvation of men, and therefore was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory. If we had here

A VAST HOSPITAL

full of sick folk, it would be the best of news for those languishing therein if I could tell them that a great physician had devoted himself to their healing; and the more I could extol the physician who had come to visit them, the more would there be of good news for them. If I could say to them, "The physician who is coming to succor you is possessed of infallible wisdom and unerring skill, and in him are united lov-

ing tenderness and infinite power," how they would smile upon their beds! Why, the very news would half restore them! Should it not be much more so with desponding and despairing souls when they hear that He who has come to save is none other than the glorious Christ of God?

The glory of Christ lies not only in His person, but in His love. Remember this, and see the Gospel which lies in it. Herein to us is His glory. He loved us so, that heaven could not hold Him; He loved us so, that He descended to redeem us; and having come among us amid our sin and shame, He loves us still. "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." Love, thou hast reached thine utmost glory in the heart of the divine Saviour! And the glory of this love, which is without beginning, boundary, change, or close, is the very life-blood of the Gospel. The love of Jesus is the glad tidings of joy.

This being so, beloved, we next see the glory of His incarnation. To us it was the glory of Christ that He was born at Bethlehem, and dwelt at Nazareth. It looks like dishonor that He should be the carpenter's son; but throughout all ages this shall be the glory of the Mediator, that He deigned to be partaker of our flesh and blood. There is

GLORY IN HIS POVERTY

and shame; glory in His having nowhere to lay His head; glory in His weariness and hunger. Surpassing glory springs from Gethsemane and the bloody sweat, from Calvary and the death of the cross. All

heaven could not yield Him such renown as that which comes from the spitting and the scourging, the nailing and the piercing. A glory of grace and tenderness surrounds the incarnate God; and this, to those convinced of sin, is the Gospel.

The glory of Christ is further seen in His atoning sacrifice. But you stop me and say, "That was His humiliation and His shame." Yes, it is true, and therefore it is His glory. Is not the Christ to every loving heart most of all glorious in the death of the cross? What garment doth so well become our Beloved as the vesture dipped in His own blood? He is altogether lovely, let Him be arrayed as He may; but when our believing hearts behold Him covered with the bloody sweat, we gaze upon Him with adoring amazement and rapturous love. His flowing crimson bedecks Him with a robe more glorious than the imperial purple. We fall at His feet with sevenfold reverence when we behold the marks of His passion. Is He not most of all illustrious as

OUR DYING SUBSTITUTE?

We will now travel a little further, to His resurrection, wherein His glory is more palpable to us. He could not be holden by the bonds of death. He was dead: His holy body could die, but it could not see corruption; so, having slept a little while within the chamber of the tomb, He arose and came forth to light and liberty—the living Christ glorified by His resurrection. Who shall tell the glory of the risen Lord? Consider it deeply, meditate upon it earnestly; and, as you do so, hear the clear sound of glad tidings of

great joy. For our greatest consolation we do not look to this precept or to that promise, so much as to Jesus Himself, who has by His rising from the dead given us the surest pledge and guarantee of our deliverance from the prison of guilt, the dungeon of despair, and the sepulchre of death.

Once more, lift up your eyes a little higher, and note the glory of His enthronement and of

HIS SECOND COMING.

He sits at the right hand of God. He that once was hung up upon the tree of shame now sitteth on the throne of universal dominion. Instead of the nail, behold the sceptre of all worlds in His most blessed hand. All things are put under His feet. His second coming, for which we daily look, is our divinest hope. Mayhap, before we fall asleep the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the trump of the archangel and the voice of God; and then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Then will our weary days be ended: the strife of tongues, the struggle against sin, the stratagems of error, all will be finished, and truth and holiness shall reign supreme.

Mark this: the less you make of Christ, the less Gospel you have to trust in. If you get rid of Christ from your creed, you have at the same time destroyed all its good news. The more Gospel we would preach, the more of Christ we must proclaim. If you lift up Christ, you lift up the Gospel. If you dream of preaching the Gospel without exalting Christ in it, you will give the people husks instead of true bread.

In proportion as the Lord Jesus is set up on a glorious high throne. He becomes salvation to the sons of men. A little Christ means a little Gospel; but the true Gospel is the glory of Christ.

II. Secondly, let us consider

THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL.

Our apostle speaks of "the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ." That light is, first of all, unveiled. Whatever light there was in the law—and there was much—it was latent light. The veil on the face of Moses was typical of the way in which the ceremonials of the law were hidden from the sight of men. We forget that a great majority of those things whereof we read in the law were never seen by the Israelites as a people. Do not suppose that any Israelite ever looked within the veil; none but the high-priest ever entered there. Even the holy place outside the veil was reserved for the priests. The most of the sacrificial types were as much matters of faith to the Israelites as the meaning is a matter of faith to us. They did not see even the patterns of the heavenly things; they had to be told of them; and in the hearing, they had to exercise faith, as we also do. But, my brethren, our Gospel is one, not of the veil which hides, but of the lamp which shines. The Gospel of the blessed God is intended to be conspicuous as the lighthouse on the rock, which is seen afar. It is so illuminating that everyone in the house may see by it. The Gospel which is not known is of no value; it is as much intended to be understood as light is meant to be seen.

This light, in the next place, is all its own. You cannot illuminate the Gospel; it is itself an illumination. Not by rhetoric and reasoning do men perceive the light of the Gospel. There is a self-manifesting and

SELF-EVIDENCING POWER

in the Gospel. It runs on its own feet, and needs no crutches. If men would read their Bibles they would, as a rule, believe their Bibles; but they will not read them. In itself the Gospel has such a wonderful power of making itself felt, that, if men did not resis its influence, it would reveal divine things to them. I wish I could induce unbelievers here to read the story of the crucifixion every morning, and to keep on reading it and studying it; for I am persuaded that the light which streams from the cross would, by the blessing of God, open their eyes, and enter their souls savingly.

For, mark you, the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ is divine light. The true power of the Gospel of Christ lies not in its natural reasonableness, nor in its adaptation to human need, nor in its moral beauty, but in the attendant power of the Spirit of God. God is in the Gospel, and therefore it is mighty. We may preach to you for a thousand years together, and never a soul of you will receive Christ, unless the same Spirit that spake light into the primeval dark shall say, "Let there be light." Salvation is a supernatural process. God Himself must come upon the scene before the eyes of a man born blind will see. This light is

A REVEALING LIGHT.

Whenever the light of the glory of Christ comes streaming into the heart, it reveals the hidden things of darkness. When the glory of Christ is seen, then we see our own shame and sinfulness. Did it need God Himself to redeem us? then we must have been in dire bondage. Did it need that the incarnate God should die? then sin must be exceeding sinful. That is a deep pit which needs that God should come from heaven to lift us out of it. What a revelation it is when the light shines into the secret chambers of imagery, and the idol gods are made manifest in all their hideousness! May God send this light to many, that their ruin, their doom, their remedy, and their way of obtaining it, may be plainly perceived.

The light of the Gospel also enlivens. No other light will give life to the dead. You may make the strongest light in the world flash frequently upon a corpse, but there will be neither breath nor pulse. But the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ brings life with it. "The life was the light of men." "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Darkness is death, but the light of God is life. Let but this Sun of Righteousness arise, and He not only brings healing, but life.

This light is photographic—you get that in the neighborhood of the text, in the last verse of the third chapter. See the Revised Version: "But we all, with unveiled face, reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image

from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit." The light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ

IMPRINTS CHRIST'S IMAGE

upon the character of every believer. We see Him, and, seeing His love, we learn to love; seeing His life, we learn to live; seeing His full atonement, we hate evil; seeing His resurrection, we rise to newness of life. By the power of the Spirit working from day to day, we are quietly transformed from our old likeness, and conformed to the likeness of Christ, till our deformity is lost in blessed comeliness of conformity to Him. If we saw Him more clearly and more constantly, we should grow into His likeness more rapidly.

No sanctification is worth having but that which comes of communion with the holy Lord through the power of the Holy Ghost. You may read the biographies of good men, and you may copy them in all simplicity, and yet in the end you may become *a caricature of perfection*, and not the very image thereof. The perfect character of Jesus is yet

THE MOST EASY TO IMITATE.

It is safe to copy Jesus; for in Him is no excess or defect; and, strange to say, that character which is in some aspects inimitable is in others the most imitable of all. I have often been depressed in view of the high character of certain saints whom I honor, because I have felt that I could never be like them, under any circumstances. I know one who is full of faith and of all goodness; but he is always solemn, and constantly absorbed "in meditations high." I never could grow exactly like him; for there are cer-

tain mirthful elements in my constitution; and if they were taken away, I should not be the same man. When I look at my Lord, I see much in Him that is supernatural, but nothing that is unnatural. We see in Him humanity in perfection; but the perfection never conceals the humanity. He is so holy as to be a perfect model; so human as to be a model available for poor creatures such as we are.

Yet, further, it creates peace and joy. This light brings delight. I cannot imagine a man unhappy who clearly perceives the light of the glory of Christ. Is Christ glorious? Then it does not much matter what becomes of me. Have you never heard of dying and wounded soldiers in Napoleon's wars who still clung to their emperor with an idolatrous love in the hour of death? Lifting himself upon his elbow, the soldier of the Old Guard gave one more cheer for the great captain. If the dying warrior saw Napoleon riding over the field, he would with his last gasp cry, "*Vive l'Empereur!*" and then expire. Infinitely more commendable is the loyalty of the believer to the Lord Christ. Surely there is a Gospel in the glory of Christ to our sad hearts. That Gospel lifts us out of the damps of doubt and fear into the clear blue of heavenly fellowship. God grant that we may feel this uplifting more and more! Thus have I tried to describe the qualities of this light; but you must see it for yourselves.

III. And now let us consider

WHAT WE SHALL DO WITH IT.

Do with it! Look towards it. Let us first indulge

ourselves with a long and steady gaze upon it. No man can look long at the sun, for it would blind him; but you may look at Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness, as long as you please, and your eyes will grow stronger the longer you gaze on His perfections. I beseech you, beloved in the Lord, to get alone, and give yourself to meditate upon the glory of the once-despised Jesus. Track Him from the cradle to the cross, from the cross to the crown. I cannot suggest to you any subject more instructive, more comforting, more ennobling, than this. Look at this light: for it is a pleasant thing to behold this sun. Have you never heard how the Laplanders climb the hills when the sun is at last a bout to appear after the weary Winter months? How they rejoice in the first beams of the rising sun! So let us rise to lofty meditation, and look to our Lord and Master, till we perceive His mediatorial glory, and are blessed thereby. Have you no time? Give up your newspaper for a week that you may sanctify the time to the noble end of considering the glory of your Lord; and I will warrant that you shall get a thousand times more out of such thought than from skimming the daily journal. Look unto Jesus, and the light will grow like the glory of heaven.

Next, if you say that a man cannot always stand looking at the sun, I admit the statement, and change the advice. See all things by this light. How differently things look in sunlight to what they do by gas-light or candle-light! Let us regard all things by their appearance in the light of the glory of Christ.

In this light you see things truly. Many of the wise men of the period ought to be treated as Diogenes treated Alexander. The conqueror of the world said to the man in the tub, "What can I do for you?" He thought he could do everything for the poor philosopher. Diogenes only replied, "Get out of the sunlight." These wise people cannot do us a greater favor than to remove their learned selves from standing between us and the sunlight of the ever-blessed Gospel of the glory of Christ.

Beloved, when asked what we should do with this light, I answer again, value it. Esteem the glorious Gospel of Christ more than all besides. Let us also hold it out with great confidence.

THIS LIGHT MUST WIN

in the long run. Preach Christ, and away goes the God of this world. Exalt Christ, and down goes the devil. Beloved, let us persuade men to let this light shine around them. They cannot see it because of unbelief; but if it shines around them, it may bring them eyes. God the Holy Spirit blessing it, light will beget sight. Induce your friends to hear the Gospel and read the Word of God, and who can tell but they will be saved?

And, lastly, let all who try to preach and teach keep Christ always in the front. The Gospel must have Christ as its centre and its circumference; in fact, as its all in all. The Gospel is not the Gospel without Christ. The Gospel will have no dominant idea in it but Christ. Let us sing with the Blessed Virgin, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my

spirit doth rejoice in God my Saviour." This is a Gospel sonnet; this is a song which our Well-Beloved deserves of us. O ye preachers and teachers, lift up Christ! He is as the serpent on the pole, and all who look to Him shall live forever. Look to Him all ye that are dying of serpent-bites; for looking, ye shall live. God bless these words in which I have desired to glorify my Lord! Amen.

III.

FALSE TRUSTS.

TEXT—"*Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts,*" *etc. Isa. 46 : 1–4.*

NOT A PROMISE FOR OLD AGE ONLY. — GOODNESS OF GOD IN ALL TENSES. — I. FALSE CONFIDENCES PASSING AWAY. — THE GODS OF BABYLON FALLING WITH THE EMPIRE. — THEIR IGNOMINIOUS TREATMENT. — FALSE PHILOSOPHIES FALLING ALSO — THE MONKEY-GOD OF MODERN THOUGHT TO FALL. — II. GOD ALWAYS THE SAME IN THE PAST. — TO HIS AGED CHILDREN. — TO ALL AGES.—IN CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES. — IN IMPENDING TRIAL. — III. GOD EVER WILL ABIDE THE SAME. — A CHILD CARRIED UP-HILL. — NO FRESH MERCY NEEDED. — PAST MERCIES CONTINUED.

THE confidence of Babylon is buried among her heaps of rubbish, for her gods have fallen from their thrones. "Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth." As for us, beloved, our trust is in the living God, who lives to bear and carry His chosen, even in Jehovah, the only true Lord. We begin our spiritual life by faith in Him, for till faith comes we have no power to become the sons of God. Our spiritual life will have to be continued, in the same way of trust in the Lord, "for the just shall live by faith." We live by faith upon the Son of God, who loved us, and gave Himself for us. We rejoice that we shall never have to change our confidence, for our God will never be carried into captivity, nor torn from His throne. Our faith is built upon a rock that can never be moved. Nothing in the past has shaken the foundation of our faith; nothing in the present can move it; nothing in

the future will undermine it. Whatever may occur in the ages to come, there will always be

GOOD REASON FOR BELIEVING

in Jehovah and His faithful word. That part of our text which says, "Even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you," may seem to be a promise made to old age. So, indeed, it is. Many a hoary saint has made a soft pillow of this precious promise, and has rested upon it with delight in the days of his decay. But yet the text, if it be rightly read, is a promise to the people of God at any and every period between their birth and their death. The Lord is good to us in all tenses, and in all ways. Our experimental dealings with God make us know that He is our gracious Helper from the first to the last. Bel and Nebo disappoint their votaries, but Jehovah is our God for ever and ever, and He will be our guide even unto death.

I. I shall begin my sermon by calling your attention, first, to the set-off and background, which are placed behind the brilliant promise given to the Lord's people. Observe that

FALSE CONFIDENCES PASS AWAY.

The Lord has made a full end of false gods and their worship. "Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy laden: they are a burden to the weary beast. They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity." Bel and Nebo were two great gods of Babylon. You get the name

of Bel in the name of king Belshazzar, and the name of Nebo in the name of Nebuchadnezzar. They were esteemed to be such great deities that their kings were named after them, and professed to be their servants. Bel and Nebo stood in Babylon supreme. The Babylonian empire which served these deities was so strong as to be invincible; it carried its cruel sword into all nations, and piled up the dead bodies of men in heaps; it was therefore dreaded in every part of the world; and not without cause. What kingdom or empire could stand against it? If you had gone to Babylon, and seen its mighty walls, its lofty towers, its engines of war, its wonders of art, its multitudes of heroes, you would have thought that the worship of Bel would endure for ever, and that the image of Nebo would stand there to be adored of mortals while the world existed.

But these idols—always a mere deceit—proved themselves powerless in the day of trial. Cyrus came, the Euphrates was dried up, the empire of Babylon ended, and the gods were discredited for all ages. In the ruin of Babylon the gods became a prey. The golden images themselves were too precious to be left standing in Babylon, and too little venerated to be treated with respect. They were taken off to Persia as a spoil, and became a burden to the weary beasts. Huge images of less costly material were dragged down with ropes, dashed in pieces, or buried beneath heaps of ruins. Ah me! what a melancholy fate for things which were called gods, and received the reverence of great nations! Even in these latter

days, we have had an illustration of "Bel boweth down, and Nebo stoopeth," when Mr. Layard went to the ruins of Babylon and Nineveh, and dragged out those huge bulls which stand to-day in the British Museum, objects of our curiosity, but certainly not of our worship. "Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth." The false gods that reigned supreme over so many myriads of men were

MADE CONTEMPTIBLE.

The like thing has happened unto false systems of teaching. They have risen, and they have dominated over the minds of men; but, like Bel and Nebo, they have tottered and fallen. They seemed to be established beyond all hope of confutation and overthrow, and yet they have passed away! If you are at all readers of the history of religious thought, you will know that systems of philosophy, and philosophical religions, have come up, and have been generally accepted as indisputable, and have done serious injury to true religion for a time: and yet they have vanished like the mirage of the desert. When at their best, they have withered; the grass has flowered, the flower has come to its full, and has fallen beneath the scythe. The gourds have come up in a night, and have perished in a night.

Even those of us who are not aged yet remember two or three different forms of philosophical divinity which preceded

THIS NEW DREAMING,

which is just now so loudly cried up. Many modern thoughts have come up, and have gone down again.

Bel has bowed down, and Nebo has stooped. The boastful "thinkers" carried up their elaborate systems into their places with great labor, and then they carried them away again, and buried them with equal labor. What philosophers prove one year, philosophers disprove another year. We old-fashioned Christians have remained unchanged in our fidelity to revealed truth, and we have seen Bel go up and Bel go down, and Nebo go up and Nebo go down. Yes, we have seen rubbish venerated as a precious thing, and anon the precious thing carted away as so much lumber. The present idols of the mind are just as worthless as those of former times. *The god of modern thought is a monkey.* If those who believed in evolution said their prayers rightly they would begin them with, "*Our Father, which art up a tree.*" Did they not all come from a monkey, according to their own statement? They came by "development," from the basest of material, and they do not belie their original. But we shall see the monkey-god go down yet, and evolution will be ridiculed as it deserves to be.

But now, beloved, it will be just the same with us if we trust in

FALSE CONFIDENCES

of any sort; such, for instance, as our experiences, or our attainments, or our services, or our orthodox belief, or aught else. If we set up any confidences apart from our God, we shall soon see the end of them. Imagine that any Christian here should be so foolish as to rely upon his own works. God forbid

we should! But what an airy nothing our confidence would be! Before long that Bel would bow down, and that Nebo would stoop, for the hope would be too flimsy to bear the least weight. Or, if we should begin to rely upon our own enjoyments—if frames and feelings should become our confidence—all would come down, and our boast would become our burden, our glory our shame. If in our daily life we look to an arm of flesh, or practice self-reliance instead of God-reliance, or if we trust to friends instead of leaning upon the one great Invisible, we shall yet learn with tears the terror of that sentence, "Cursed is he that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." "Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth"; anything that you make your confidence instead of God, will fail to bear your burden, and will itself become a burden to you. Instead of its carrying you, you will have to carry *it*. Instead of its taking your load, it will increase your load, and become at last an intolerable curse.

"Little children, keep yourselves from idols." Beloved in the Lord, think not that this is an unnecessary warning even for you, for you may as easily set up an idol in your heart as other men may set up a false system of philosophy, or an idol god. Guard against setting up a rival trust to rob the Lord of even a small part of your confidence. Let us lean upon our God with all our weight, and lean nowhere else; for if we put our confidence elsewhere, our idolatry will come home to us, and we shall hear the voice of disappointment, wailing bitterly, "Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth."

II. Let that stand as the black cloud on which God will paint His bright rainbow, while I notice in the second place, that our

GOD ABIDES ALWAYS THE SAME.

Dear friends, we rightly expect trials between here and heaven; and the ordinary wear and tear of life, even if life should not be clouded by an extreme trial, will gradually wear us out. If life should flow never so smoothly, yet there are the rapids of old age, and the broken waters of infirmity, and the cataract of disease; and these we are apt to dread; but why? Is not the Lord our trust? Is it not sure that the Lord changes not? Make this your strong confidence. As for you, ye youths, ye are strong, but boast not of your strength; the Lord Jehovah is our strength and our song. As for you in the midst of life—tremble not because of your difficulties: "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" As for you that are sinking into the decline of life, and know that very soon your tabernacle will be taken down, be not afraid, for the Lord has not altered. Hath He not said, "I am the Lord, I change not"? Let this be your delight.

In the course of years, not only do we change, but our circumstances change. Many look forward to trying circumstances in the declining days of life. "When I cannot earn my livelihood, when I cannot go out to the farm, or stand at the counter, or work at the bench, what will become of me then?" Hearken, my brother, if you are where you ought to be, your confidence is in God *now*, and you will have the same God *then*, and He will still be your guardian

and provider. He will be under no decay from age, nor decline from weakness. His bank will not break, nor His treasury fail. His granary will not be exhausted, and His bounty will not be worn out. Trust in Him for that which is written between the folded leaves of destiny, as well as for the page which lies open before you. If the infirmities of the body scare you, trust Him; and if the changing circumstances of your life alarm you, trust Him, for *He* must be the same, though heaven and earth should be dissolved. He says, "Even to old age I am He."

"Ah!" say you, "but what I must mourn is *the death of friends*." Yes; that calamity is

A DAILY SORROW

to men who are getting into years. A new-made grave is with us every day. How many of those whom I dearly loved are now with God? When we near sixty, or pass onward towards seventy, we lament the multitude of dear friends that have fallen like the innumerable leaves of Autumn. Some of us have now more friends in heaven than we have on earth. The best are going, still going: the messengers with heavy tidings follow close upon each other's heels. One of these days we think that some friend will cry, "I only am left." Ah, yes! But the Lord says, "I AM HE," as much as to say, "I am left to you, and will not fail you."

Some trouble themselves concerning prophetic crises which are threatened. One would think, from their perpetual alarms, that the prophets wrote to afflict us rather than to comfort us. "Oh, what shall

I do," says one, "if there should be 'wars and rumors of wars, and earthquakes in divers places,' and so forth?" What would you wish to do but trust in the Lord even as you do now? Certainly, we only see part of the Lord's way; and if we could see the whole we should most probably rejoice where now we grieve. Why, then, are we cast down? The Lord Himself says to us, "even to your old age I am He." The Lord took care of the world before we were here to help Him, and He will do it just as well when we are gone. We can leave politics, religion, trade, morals and everything else with Him. What we have to do is to obey Him, and trust Him, and rejoice in Him, and go on our way rejoicing.

"Still," says one, "there are such

EVIL TOKENS IN THE CHURCH

itself as must cause serious apprehension to godly men." Yes, I know it. I have had to know it to my personal sorrow. The Church grows old; gray hairs are upon her here and there, and she knoweth it not. But never despair of the Church of God, for of her it is true, "Even to hoary hairs will I carry you; to your old age I am He." The Head of the Church never alters. Let us not be afraid, though clouds should come, for it is written, "Behold he cometh with clouds." God is the same, there is the corner-stone of our comfort.

If you are depending upon anything or any person besides your God, woe unto you! "Oh," say you, "I used to hear a dear old minister in my early days; but I find none like him now. He has gone home;

and I feel as if I could cry, 'My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof'!" I could make some of you weep if I were to go through the list of those holy men who fed you with food convenient for you in your younger days. Where are the teachers and fathers now? But then the point is, the God of these saints is not dead. The Great Shepherd of Israel still lives, and he leads us still, and feeds us still, and guards us still; and He will guard His flock, and guide His flock, till he makes us to lie down in the green pastures on the hill-tops of glory.

III. And now, thirdly, I want to call your attention, in the words before us, to the fact that, while false confidences pass away, God will forever be the same. His former mercies

GUARANTEE FUTURE MERCIES.

First, you see, He says, "*I have made.*" The Lord, who is your helper, is He that created you. It is well to remember the mercy of God to us in our formation, and in the first days of our birth and infancy. We know very little indeed about those first three or four years, yet the Lord fed us, and led us, and here we are in proof of it. But think, beloved! God made us in another sense. He new-made us. Blessed is the man that has been twice born, and thus twice made! The Lord God has made us new creatures in Christ Jesus. He has made us to be His children: we have been "begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." If He has done all this, He does not intend to leave us till He has finished the work of grace with power. He

who hath begun a good work in us will carry it on, and perfect it unto the day of Christ. The past guarantees the future, since we have to do with a God who can never change.

But I must not linger on any point, as our time flies; I must notice next that, practically, God's mercies through life are always the same. No new form of mercy is ever wanted; all we need is the old mercy repeated, and adapted to our case. My dear friend, you will never want anything of God but what you have already had. The grace that saves the young man will save the old man. The patience that bore with your follies in youth will bear with your weakness in age. Depend upon it, you will require nothing but what you have already received the like. In this matter, the thing that has been, is the thing that shall be, and there is nothing new under the sun.

As for this "*carrying*" of which the text speaks, assuredly that is no new thing. Our first spiritual blessing came of our being carried: we were sheep going astray, and the Shepherd came after us; and, when He found us, He carried us upon His shoulders rejoicing, and brought us home. Many a rough place have I encountered in my life's pilgrimage, and I have wondered how I should ever get over it; but I have been

CARRIED OVER THE ROCKY WAY

so happily that the passage has made one of the most charming memories of my heart. I begin to like rough places, even as Rutherford fell in love with the cross he had to carry. When the road is smooth, I

have to walk; but when it is very rough I am carried. Therefore, I feel somewhat like the little boy I saw the other night. His father had been carrying him up-hill; but when he reached a piece of level road, the boy was a great lump to carry, and his father set him down, and let him walk. Then the little gentleman began to pull at his father's coat, and I heard him say, "Carry me, father! Carry me, father. Carry me again!" Just so. Any sensible child of God will still say, "Carry me, Father! Carry me still, I pray Thee!" The Father's answer is, "I have made and I will bear; even I will carry you."

The promise closes with the words, "And I will deliver you." That is no new mercy. Have you not been delivered many times already? "The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine"—so David trusted, and so do we. See how Paul puts it: "Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us." See! it is a note from the same trumpet, a voice from the same mouth. Wherefore, beloved, as you will only want the same mercy repeated, be confident, be joyful. Do not dread to-morrow. Do not fear next year. Do not pine because of the coming of old age. Do not dread that painful operation which seems needful. Do not dread even death itself. He that made you will make you to endure; He that has carried you, will carry you; He that has delivered you will deliver you to the end. Blessed be God, we only want a contin-

uance of the same mercy as we have already experienced, and that the Lord promises to us.

And now, to close, notice in the text two

THINGS WHICH ARE ALWAYS HERE—

the same God and the same mercy. There is nobody else here but the Lord alone with His people. Will you note that? There is nobody else here but you and your God; and you are nobody but a poor thing that has to be carried. "Even to your old age *I* am He. Even to hoary hairs will *I* carry you. *I* have made, and *I* will bear; even *I* will carry, and will deliver you." We have great admiration of angels, but we are very pleased to see that they are not mentioned in this promise. We have many kind-hearted friends, but we are glad to see that they are not brought in here. God's great *I*, and that alone, fills up the whole space. And Oh, what a blessing it is when we trust in the Lord alone! You have been, perhaps, as I have often been, in a cleft stick, where nobody could tell you how to get out, but yet the Lord found a way of escape for you. You were shut up, and you could not come forth and then God cleared the way in a moment. What a great Maker of ways is God!

You young people, oh how earnestly I wish that you would begin with my Lord Jesus Christ—begin with the great and blessed Father, and Him, for He will take care of you to hoary hairs! Oh my brothers, do trust my God! Do not let the world say, "God's own people cannot trust Him"! Surely they will think that He is not to be depended on if *you* begin

to doubt Him. Trust Him as He deserves to be trusted, and rest in Him with all your souls. And you, my aged brethren and sisters, to whom I speak with much reverence, show to us who are younger, where your joy and your peace are, that we also may rest in God. He has brought you through seventy years of trial! Do you think that He will now forsake you? You are eighty, you say, or even getting on to ninety. Well, you have at least eighty reasons why you should not distrust your God and Saviour. If you will read your own diaries, you will see that there are eighty million reasons why you should trust Him, and yet you cannot find one solitary reason why you should not do so. Wherefore, "rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him," and may He bless you evermore, for Jesus' sake!

IV.

EYES RIGHT!

TEXT—"*Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.*" *Prov. 4 : 25.*

DIRECTIONS FOR KEEPING THE MEMBERS OF THE BODY.—PERSONS LIVING AS IF IN SLEEP.—OTHERS STARING AROUND.—HAVE A WAY, AND LET IT BE STRAIGHT.—I. LET CHRIST BE YOUR WAY.—SEEK TO HAVE HIM.—TO KNOW HIM.—TO OBEY HIM.—TO BE LIKE HIM.—TO WIN SOULS FOR HIM.—II. SET YOUR EYES ON HIM.—TO KNOW THE WAY OF LIFE.—AVOID RETROSPECTION.—AND INTROSPECTION.—AND MUCH CIRCUMSPECTION.—LOOKING WITH THE EYELIDS.—III. LOOK TO CHRIST ALONE.—NOT TO SECONDARY AIMS.—LOOK TILL FAITH COMES.

THESE words occur in a passage wherein the wise man exhorts us to take care of all parts of our nature, which he indicates by members of the body. "Keep thy *heart*," says he, "with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward *mouth*, and perverse *lips* put far from thee. Let thine *eyes* look right on, and let thine *eyelids* look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy *feet*, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy *foot* from evil." It is clear that every part of our nature needs to be carefully watched, lest in any way it should become the cause of sin. Any one member or faculty is readily able to defile all the rest, and, therefore,

EVERY PART MUST BE GUARDED

with care. We have selected for our meditation the verse which deals with the eye. These windows of light need to be watched in their incomings, lest that which we take into our soul should be darkness rather

than light; and they need to be watched in their outgoings, lest the glances of the eye should be full of iniquity, or should suggest foolish thoughts. Hence, the wise man advises, "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee." Have eyes, and use them. Using them, take care to use them honestly.

Some persons are always as if they were asleep. They go through the world mooning about, seeing nothing, or seeing men as if they were trees, with a sight which is not sight, but blindness hidden. The shadows of this transient life impress them, and that is all: they have never awakened yet to the true life and its solemn realities. They have never seen anything in very truth; for

IT IS FAITH THAT SEES,

and of faith they have none. That which is apart from faith is not visible to the soul, however clear it may be to the eye. We have thousands around us who need to be startled out of that slumber in which they see the fabrics of their dreams, and the unsubstantial fancies of the hour. They say, "We see;" but scales are on their eyes.

Many others are somewhat awake mentally, but they are not looking right on, neither do their eyelids look straight before them. They are staring about them, star-gazing, wondering what will be seen next: always ready, like the Athenians, to hear and see some new thing. They have never yet discovered that this life is a preface to a life of diviner mould. They do not regard the present as the lowly porch of

the glorious edifice of the future. They have not thought that time is but

THE DOORSTEP OF ETERNITY,

a thing of small account, save that it is linked with the endless ages; and so they seek after this, and then after that, and then after the other; and always after that which is too poor, too trifling, to be the object of a mind capable of fellowship with God. To beings who lead such purposeless lives we would address the words of the wise man, "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee." Have something to do, and do it. Have something to live for, and live for it. Get to know the right way, and, knowing the right way, keep to it with full purpose of heart and concentration of faculty.

If a man is to let his eyes look right on, and his eyelids straight before him, then he is to have a way, and that way is

TO BE A STRAIGHT WAY,

and in that straight way he is to persevere. You cannot see to the end of a crooked way. You can only see a small part of a way that twists and winds. Choose, then, a direct path which has an end which you dare think of and look upon. Some men's lives are such that they dare not think of what the end of them must be. They would not long pursue their present track if they were forced to gaze into that dread abyss, which is the only possible close of an evil course. The way of transgressors is hard in itself, but it is hardest of all when we behold their dreadful end.

Every wise man will conclude that the best way for a man is the way which God has made for him. He that made us knows what He made us for, and He knows by what means we may best arrive at that end. According to divine teaching, as gracious as it is certain, we learn that the way of eternal life is Jesus Christ. Christ Himself says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life"; and he that would pursue life after a right fashion must look to Jesus, and must continue looking unto Jesus, not only as the author, but as the finisher of his faith. It shall be to him a golden rule of life, when he has chosen Christ to be his way, to let his eyes look right on, and his eyelids straight before him. He need not be afraid to contemplate the end of that way, for the end of the way of Christ is life and glory with Christ for ever. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."

A friend said to me the other day, "How happy are we to know that whatever happens to us in this life it is well!" "Yes," I added, "and to know that if this life ends, it is equally well, or better." With all my heart I invite any who have never yet begun to live after a right fashion, to take Christ to be the way of life to them; and then I entreat them to let their eyes look straight on, and their eyelids straight before them, and to follow Jesus without giving a glance either to the right hand or to the left, till it shall be said of them, even in glory, "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth."

I. I shall make my earnest appeals to the heart and conscience by beginning with this first exhortation:

LET CHRIST BE YOUR WAY.

If Christ be your way, you will begin first to seek to have Christ. "How shall I have Him?" says one. Dost thou desire Him? Wilt thou accept Him? He is thine. The act of accepting Christ secures Christ to us; for the Father freely gives Him to all who freely accept Him. Some are troubled through ignorant and unbelieving fears, and are saying, "I wish I could lay hold on Jesus! I wish I knew that Christ was mine!" Art thou willing to have Him? Who made thee willing? Dost thou desire Him? Who made thee desire Him? Who but the Spirit of the Lord? Wilt thou now take Jesus to be thy Saviour, to save thee from thy sin? Then depend on it, He is thine. Let your eyes look right on, and your eyelids straight before you, till you find Him. Look nowhere else but to Him and after Him. Shut yourself up in your room; determine not to come out again until you have Him, and it shall not be long before you find Him. Concentrating all your gaze upon the Crucified, light shall come from Him, causing the scales to fall from your eyes, and you shall see Him, even you that could not see; and you shall cry in delight, "He is mine, He is mine." Remember how David said to his son, "If thou seek Him, He will be found of thee."

When you have Christ, the next business of your life must be to know Christ. Seek to know more of Him, to know Him better, to know Him more practi-

cally, to know Him more assuredly. "That I may know Him," said the apostle, after he had been a believer in Him for fifteen years. That same man of God speaks of "the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," even his knowledge, which was of the fullest sort; so that he meant to go on learning more and more of Christ, and he did not count himself to have attained. Christian men and women, you do not know your great Master yet. Here have some of us been nearly forty years in His service, and yet we could not describe Him to our own satisfaction. In this matter let your eyes look right on, and your eyelids straight before you.

When you come to know somewhat of what He is, then go on

TO OBEY CHRIST.

Is there anything that He has bidden you do? Do it. Some Christians have never yet been baptized: how will they answer for wilful neglect of a known duty? Others have been Christians for years, and yet have never communed at the Lord's table. Jesus said, "If ye love Me keep My commandments." Do they keep His commandments? It was His dying request, "This do in remembrance of Me," and yet they will not fulfill it. Even such a tender request they slight, as though it were of no importance whatever, as if their Lord was a mere nobody whose wishes might well be overlooked. What shall I say of many of the biddings of our holy Gospel, many of those sweet precepts which are to be used in the family, and in the business, and in the field? What forgetfulness there

is of them! What said the blessed Virgin to those who were at the feast? Note the words, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." It was well spoken of the favored mother, and it remains as a golden precept for us all — "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." Make no reserve, exercise no choice, but obey His command. When you know what He commands do not hesitate, question, or try to avoid it, but, "do it": do it at once, do it heartily, do it cheerfully, do it to the full.

That being attended to, remember, if Christ be your way, you have further to

SEEK TO BE LIKE HIM,

not only to do as He did, but to be as He was, for "as He was, so are we in this world." What a man *does* is important, but what a man *is*, is all-important. The ring of the metal is something, but if its ring could be imitated by a brass coin, it would be nothing. It is, after all, the substance of the metal that decides its value. "As we have born the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly"; and we must begin to bear that heavenly image even now. This, therefore, we must aim at, though as yet we have not attained it. Here is something to be thought of very carefully, and I charge you, by the Holy Ghost, let your eyes look right on, and your eyelids straight before you, that you may be transformed from glory to glory into the image of the Lord. God grant that it may be so with each one of us!

Now, supposing that we have attained to all this, if Christ is our way, and our model, there is something

more, namely that we seek to glorify Christ, and labor to win others to Him. Here is a grand

FIELD FOR ALL OUR ENERGIES.

Are not some of you indifferent as to whether your fellow-men are lost or saved? Have not some of you, in your families, come to this pass—that you see your brother an infidel, your sister frivolous, your parents godless, and yet it does not fret you? I think that if I had godless relatives, it would break my night's rest, not now and then, but always. A brother, a father, a child unsaved! What mean ye by taking your ease? We need men and women who live to convert others to Christ. The minister had better quit his pulpit if it be not his one burning desire to bring hearts to Jesus' feet. If a divine impulse be not upon him, driving him to seek the souls of men, let him go elsewhere with his windy periods. Professors have little right to be in Christ's Church, unless they are passionately in earnest to increase His kingdom by the salvation of their fellow-men. O, my brothers and sisters, on whom is the blood-mark of redemption, I charge you concerning this matter to "let your eyes look right on, and let your eyelids look straight before you"!

II. Following the text again, only working it a little differently, the second exhortation is,

SET YOUR EYES ON HIM

as your way. First, that you may know the way of life, let your eyes be fixed on Him. Soul, art thou in the dark? Kneel down and pray, and look Christward. Saint, art thou bewildered? Go to the way

of the Cross, the way of the Crucified, for that is the true and sure path. Sinner, art thou burdened? Wouldst thou be rid of thy burden? Run Christward. Any direction given thee to go anywhere else will misdirect thee. I say not to any one I meet to-night, "Go to the wicket-gate." Neither will I bid you go to any light within, and run that way. My only direction is, "Go to Jesus!" "To Christ!" "To Christ!" "To Christ!" That is the sole inscription upon every finger-post of the road to heaven. Keep to the King's highway.

Look alone to Jesus, and do this to keep your spirits up. Some men's eyes do not look right on, and their eyelids do not look straight before them, for

THEY LOOK BACK

upon that part of the road which they have traversed, and grow content with which they have already attained. They live in *retrospection.* When you begin to look back at what you have done, and rub your hands, and say with self-satisfaction, "I remember when I did right well," wisdom warns you that this is not the right kind of look. What have you to look back upon! Poor, weak creature! Forget that which is behind, and press forward to something better and higher.

Some spend much of their time in what is called *introspection.* Now introspection, like retrospection, is a useful thing in a measure; but it can readily be overdone, and then it breeds morbid emotions, and creates despair. Some are always looking into their own feelings. A healthy man hardly knows whether

he has a stomach or a liver; it is your sickly man who grows more sickly by the study of his inward complaints. Too many wound themselves by

STUDYING THEMSELVES.

Every morning they think of what they should feel: all day long they dwell on what they are not feeling; and at night they make diligent search for what they have been feeling. It looks to me like shutting up your shop, and then living in the counting-house, taking account of what is not sold. Small profits will be made in this way. I remember Mr. Moody saying that a looking-glass was a capital thing to show you the spots on your face; but you could not wash in a looking-glass. You want something very different when you would make your face clean. So let your eyes look right on. Forget yourself, and think only of Christ.

Some not only unduly practice retrospection and introspection, but they carry much too far a sort of *circumspection*. They look all round them: they look upon their past, and their present, and their fears, and their doubts, and from all these things they judge their condition, and decide their state of mind. You recollect Peter. He cried to his Lord, "Bid me come unto Thee on the water." He receives permission. Down the side of the boat goes Peter. To his intense surprise he is standing on a wave. Peter had never done such a thing before in his life as walk on the water. He might have kept on standing on the wave, and he might have walked all the way to Jesus, if he had kept his eyes on his Master until he reached

Him. The waters would have borne him up as well as a granite pavement; but Peter began to look at the billows, and he listened to the howling of the wind, and then to the beating of his own heart; and down he went; and then he had to cry to his Master. "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee": thou canst walk the waters all the way to the golden shore, if thou canst but stop thine eyes to all things else.

Surely I may use the text as an illustration of that closing of the eyes. "Let thine eyes look right on." "I understand that," says one, "for I trust. But you cannot

LOOK WITH YOUR EYELIDS."

What can that mean? Remember that you can shut your eyes with your eyelids to a great many things, and so cease to see them; and in the matter of faith sight a great many things are best not seen. So when you would otherwise see the danger, and all the difficulties and the doubts, do not look with your eyes, but look with your eyelids. Not to look at the difficulties at all is all the look they deserve. Let your eyelids shut out the view which would create distrust. Do not see, do not feel, "only believe." Draw down the blinds, and see nothing, know nothing, believe nothing but the living word of the living Saviour. "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee."

III. But my time has almost expired, and I have only to lay emphasis on one more matter. Let your eyes distinctly and directly

LOOK TO CHRIST ALONE.

I have gone over this before, but I need to hammer at it again, in order to clinch the nail. *Look not to any human guide,* but look to Christ Jesus alone. We have no faith in priests; but it is a very easy thing to fix your faith upon a minister, and hear what he says, and believe it because he says it. I charge you, believe nothing that I tell you if it cannot be supported by the Word of God. I am content to stand or to fall by this: "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, there is no light in them." I will quote the authority of no other book, whoever may have composed it; no ancient book, let it belong even to the earliest days of the Church. This one inspired volume is the text-book of our religion. Follow Holy Scripture, and you have an infallible chart. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the one apostle and high-priest of our profession; follow Him.

Again, look not on any secondary aims. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. In seeking Christ, make no bargain with gain or reputation; be content to loose all gold and all honor if you may but win Christ. To follow religion for pelf would be a mean act of hypocrisy, and to leave it for the same reason is equally vile. Let your eyes be fixed on following your Lord, and as to any worldly consequences, bring your eyelids into use, keep them fast closed, and go right on in implicit obedience to your Lord.

And, lastly, take care that you continue gazing upon Christ until you have faith in Him. "Faith cometh

by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Go on hearing the Word of God till faith come thereby. Do you ask me

HOW FAITH COMES?

It is the gift of God, but it usually comes in a certain way. Thinking of Jesus, and meditating upon Jesus, will breed faith in Jesus. I was struck with what one said the other day of a certain preacher. The hearer was in deep concern of soul, and the minister preached a very pretty sermon indeed, decorated abundantly with word-painting. I scarcely know any brother who can paint so daintily as this good minister can; but this poor soul, under a sense of sin, said, "There was *too much landscape, sir.* I did not want landscape; I wanted salvation." Dear friend, never crave word-painting when you attend a sermon; but crave Christ. You must have Christ to be your own by faith, or you are a lost man. When I was seeking the Saviour I remember hearing a very good doctrinal sermon; but when it was over I longed to tell the minister that there was a poor lad there who wanted to know how he could be saved. How I wished he had given half a minute to that subject!

I am not here to give you intellectual treats: my eyes look right on to your salvation. Oh that yours may look that way! Go after Christ, dear friend! Seek after Christ with your whole heart and soul. Feel that the one thing you must have is to be reconciled to God by the death of His Son. Keep on with that cry, "None but Christ; none but Christ." Then you will soon find Him. "Let your eyes look right

on, and let your eyelids look straight before you," and you shall see the Lord of grace appearing to you through the mist and through the cloud, that self-same Saviour who stands in the midst of us even now, and cries, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God and there is none else."

V.

MY PERSONAL HOLDFAST.

TEXT—"*My God will hear me.*" *Micah 7 : 7.*

CONFIDENCE IN PRAYER ESSENTIAL TO PREVAILING.—I. THE RESULTS OF CONFIDENCE.—A RESORT IN THE WORST OF TIMES.—NOT A FORLORN HOPE.—A BULWARK AGAINST DESPAIR.—PATIENCE ENCOURAGED.—THE PUNCTUALITY OF GOD.—AN ANSWER TO ENEMIES.—RISING AGAIN ASSURED.—CONFIDENCE THAT LIGHT WILL COME.—II. THE REASON FOR THE CONFIDENCE.—THE FAITHFUL PROMISER.—PAST EXPERIENCE.—PHILOSOPHY TESTED BY A POST.—III. THE CONFIDENCE IN EXERCISE.—LEADS TO APPLYING TO GOD FIRST.—TO REAL PRAYER.—HOW TO PRAY.

OBSERVE that the prophet has no sort of doubt. He insinuates no "if" or "but" or "peradventure," but he says it straight out as a fact of which he is infallibly convinced—"My God will hear me." What a blessed thing it is that a child of God knows and feels that this is true; wherever he fails, he will succeed at the throne! If all other friendly ears are closed, his Friend of friends will hear him. Lose your confidence in the power of prayer, and I know not what remains to you. If you are obliged to say, "My God will *not* hear me"—if that is the language of your unbelieving spirit—the tendon-Achilles is cut, and you cannot stand with confidence, much less run with delight. With faith in prayer you have heaven's

TREASURES AT YOUR DISPOSAL;

but if you ask waveringly, you find that warning true, "He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. Let not that man think

that he shall receive anything of the Lord." It is a very wide question, that of God's hearing the prayer of men, and I should need a considerable time to describe particularly whose prayers the Lord will hear, and what prayers He will hear, and how it is true that He always hears, whatever His answer may be. But it will be a far better thing if, without debate, you can personally say for yourself, "Let others say what they will, and judge what they please in this matter, I am persuaded by the Spirit of all grace that my God will hear me." If, so far as you yourself are concerned, you have this assurance, your own feet are upon a rock, and you need not trouble about the sand and the mire. This assurance, "My God will hear me," is better than all the aid of mortal men, and a greater wealth than the mines of India could afford you.

I. I shall try to speak, in the first place, upon

THE RESULTS OF CONFIDENCE

in prayer in believers. When they can truly say, "My God will hear me," the best consequences will come of it. Think of what will happen to them. To begin with, in the worst of times God is their resort. In reading the chapter we saw that the times were desperate. The nation had become rotten throughout; "the good man is perished out of the earth; and there is none upright among men." Justice was openly sold; bribes were unblushingly taken, and even openly demanded. In business all were dishonest; "the best of them is a briar; the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge." In domestic

life there was no trusting friend or husband or wife or son or daughter. The whole land had become corrupt; and as the prophet surveyed it with tears in his eyes, he could see nothing worth the looking upon, and he cried, "Therefore I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me."

His conviction that God would hear his prayer was his last comfort, and it led him to close his eyes upon the spectacle of universal crime and look heavenward, and heavenward only. When you have faith in prayer you will, in the cloudy and dark day, find consolation in looking to God, who is the blessed sun from whom a brighter day will come. Instead of being overcome by doubt you will gather up your faith, which else might have been scattered among men, and you will place the whole of it upon God, who still remains true and faithful and holy. Men who have confidence in prayer have perpetual errands at the throne, for they have abundant trials in the wickedness of men, and they look for more abundant mercies from the Lord. If they are in straitened circumstances they run to their Father in heaven to ask that their daily bread may be given them; and if they enjoy plenty, with equal earnestness they pray that their abundance may be sanctified. In any case the believer has abundant reasons for

PRAYING WITHOUT CEASING.

Another blessing which we derive from the certainty that God hears our prayer is that our eyes are led to look to God with hope. Not only do we turn

to the Lord because we have no other resort, but because we look to Him with joyful expectation. The prophet says, "Therefore will I look unto the Lord. I will wait for the God of my salvation." We view our God, not as a forlorn hope, but as the sure source of salvation to us. Many things are taken from us, but hope remains forever in the box, which is not that of Pandora, but of Jehovah. It is one of the best of our blessings that we "through patience and comfort of the Scriptures may have hope." It is no small thing to keep hope alive in the human bosom: it is the direst of calamities when it dies out. Whence the suicide — the plunge into the dark wave, or the crimson gash that lets out a soul? Are not those gates of grim death opened as hope flies away? Whence that listlessness, that lethargy, that want of energy, that letting things drift to ruin? It is because hope has quitted the helm, and the ship is drawn upon the rocks. Kill hope in a man, and you have killed the man's best self. The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but "a wounded spirit, who can bear?" Now, a firm conviction that God will hear prayer is a life-buoy to a sinking hope. He will not give all up who believes that his God will hear him.

Surely, these are two choice blessings—to be enabled to look always to God, and to look towards Him evermore with hope; but we go further. A full conviction of the certainty that God will hear our prayers helps us to wait with patience. "I will wait for the God of my salvation." He may not answer me to-day, but He will hear me. To-morrow may not bring

me the expected deliverance, but it will come. Though the vision tarry, I will wait for it; for it shall come, and according to the reckoning of infinite wisdom it really will not tarry. Great is

THE PUNCTUALITY OF GOD.

He never is before His time, but He never is behind. He is not only present when we need Him, but we find Him "a very present help in trouble." We find it good to wait, because we have no fear of being disappointed. In all difficulties, and under all opposition, we shall be able to endure with patience the will of the Lord, if we remain firm in the assurance that prayer is heard of the Lord. I often repeat Ralph Erskine's ditty:

> "I'm heard when answered, soon or late,
> Yea, heard when I no answer get;
> I'm kindly answered when refused,
> And treated well when harshly used."

It is so. No good thing will the Lord withhold from them that walk uprightly; and, therefore, if an answer to prayer be withheld, it is because what we sought was not for our real good. A flat denial in form may be a full grant in essence, since all our prayers are comprehended in "Thy will be done;" and this is the standing corrective for all that we ask amiss. If, then, in prayer we do not have our will of God in one way, yet we shall have it in another; for we evermore, in the inmost depths of our soul, are praying, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." The Lord will either give us what we ask, or do some better thing for us.

If you now pass on to the verse that follows the text, you will get another series of thoughts, showing the result of an assured conviction that God hears prayer. Observe that it gives us an answer to our enemies. "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy, my God will hear me." The foe has seen me fall, and he has hastened to set his foot upon me; but I do not lie there in despair, surrendering myself to be destroyed by him, for "My God will hear me.' How bravely can we deride derision, and pour scorning upon the scorners, even when they are in their glory, when we firmly believe that the Lord heareth prayer! They reckon that we are defeated, that we have no one to plead our cause, that we shall never be heard of again, and they have very ingenious ways of telling us these cruel persuasions of theirs. We answer them by declaring boldly that our heavenly Father has heard our cries, and that, before long, He will make this clear even to our foes. "Then mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her which said unto me, Where is thy God?"

WE FIGHT A WAITING BATTLE.

Fabius saved Rome by waiting, and we, also, are saved by the hope which waits upon the Lord, and bides the time of the faithful promise. The saint is no Cæsar, who boastfully writes, "*veni, vidi, vici;*" but his dispatches are written with the pen of patience, and here is one of them, "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in His word do I hope." We are of the tribe of Gad, of whom it is written, "A troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the

last." As for me, my heart is quiet beneath the contumely which comes of defending the Lord's own truth, for He will justify me before long; and if He should not do so speedily, yet He will do it ultimately: yea, I am happy to wait even till after death, for I know that my justifier liveth, and that, though after my skin worms devour this body, yet shall my Lord vindicate me and all others who have been faithful.

Again, our confidence in a prayer-hearing God sustains us with the bright

PROSPECT OF RISING

when we are down. What saith the prophet? "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy! when I fall, I shall arise." What if I have slipped? What if, through pressure of pain and sorrow, my spirits have sunk within me? What if I am a broken and crushed man? Yet I can pray, and I do pray, and my God will hear me; therefore I shall arise again. Oh, blessed thought! The Christian may fall very low, but underneath him are the everlasting arms. Even though we fall into the grave, blessed be God we can fall no lower; and then comes the rising from among the dead, the rising to the throne. It makes my spirit leap within me to think how this conviction that God hears prayer begets in us the joyful certainty that we cannot be left in the dust, but we must arise, and shake ourselves, and put on our beautiful array.

A firm conviction that the Lord hears prayer gives the soul confidence that

LIGHT WILL COME

to it. The prophet says, "When I sit in darkness,

the Lord shall be a light unto me." This delightful expectation springs out of that little word, "My God will hear me." If I am plunged in darkness I shall still pray; and as the Lord will hear me, He will give me light. Prayer lights candles where there are none. My God: my light. It cannot be that a Christian should be in the dark and have his God with him: for if his God be with him it must be light round about him! Joy and comfort must spring up in the most barren misery if we know how to pray: the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose if the feet of supplication touch it. They said that where the Tartar's foot fell the grass was withered; but we may say that where the believer's knee touches, all is made fruitful. God keep us in this conviction; for I say again, if this goes, all goes: if there is no more power in prayer, religion is either a nullity, or a mere piece of fanaticism, or a juggle of priestcraft.

All those are the results of holding firmly to the doctrine of effectual prayer; and to us most excellent results they are.

II. And from this I pass on to notice

THE REASON FOR THE CONFIDENCE

which believers exhibit in the matter of prayer. They speak not without reason when they say, "My God will hear me." Why do we thus believe? We believe it first, and mainly, because of the faithful Promiser. The character of the Lord God, who has promised to answer prayer, the truthfulness of the Lord Jesus, who has said, "If ye shall ask anything in My name I will do it," and the wisdom of the Holy

Spirit who indites the prayer—in a word, the character of God Himself constrains us to rely upon His word without a doubt. It is declared, over and over, in the inspired Scriptures of truth, that "He that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." We have the command "Ask, and it shall be given you." I had rather have one little promise in the corner of the Bible to support my faith than I would have all the philosophies of scientific men to sustain my opinion.

The history of philosophy is, in brief, the history of fools. All the sets of philosophers that have yet lived have been more successful in contradicting those that came before them than in anything else. Within a few years the evolutionists will be cut in pieces by some new dreamers. The reigning philosophers of the present period have in them so much of the vitality of madness that they will be a perpetual subject of contempt; and I venture to prophesy that, before my head shall lie in the grave, there will hardly be a notable man left who will not have washed his hands of the present theory. That which is taught to-day for a certainty by *savants* will soon have been so disproved as to be trodden down as the mire in the streets. The Lord's truth liveth and reigneth, but man's inventions are but for an hour. I am no prophet, nor the son of a prophet; but as I have lived to see marvellous changes in the dogmas of philosophy, I expect to see still more.

SEE HOW THEY HAVE SHIFTED.

They used to tell us that the natural depravity of our

race was a myth—they scouted the idea that we were born in sin, and declared, with mimic sentiment, that every dear babe was perfect. Now what do they tell us? Why, that if we do not inherit the original sin of Adam, or any other foregoing man; yet we have upon us the hereditary results of the transgressions of the primeval oysters, or other creatures, from which we have ascended or descended. We bear in our bodies, if not in our souls, the effects of all the tricks of the monkeys whose future was entailed upon us by evolution. This nonsense is to be received by learned societies with patience, and accepted by us with reverence, while the simple statements of Holy Writ are regarded as mythical or incredible. I only mention this folly for the sake of showing that the opponents of the Word of God constantly shift their positions, like quicksands at a river's mouth; but they are equally dangerous, whatever position they occupy. In the announcement of heredity philosophical thought has deprived itself of all power to object to the Biblical doctrine of original sin. This is of no consequence to us, who care nothing for their objections; but it ought to be some sort of hint to them.

I feel ashamed to add anything to the first overwhelming reason for faith, for that is enough and more than enough; yet, since faith is so often weak, we may place beneath it another prop. We believe in prayer because of

OUR PAST EXPERIENCE.

Certain of us could not say less than "My God will hear me," for if we did we should be traitors to the

witness of our lives. I shall not turn this into an experience-meeting, but, if I did, what testimonies we could produce to answered prayer! I will not even quote a selection from the many great and special answers which I have personally received; but all the saints of God are one in their testimony upon this point.

When the philosopher said that there was no such thing as matter, he who hurt his head against a post was convinced of the contrary; and when another great theorist said that there was no such thing as mind, he who had been heart-broken with sorrow could not be converted to the opinion. It is hard to argue against our experience and consciousness. We are case-hardened. The Creol proverb says, "When the musquito tried to sting the alligator, he wasted his time:" and the case is much the same when infidels deal with us. It would be needful to convince us that facts are not facts, that deliverances from trouble were not deliverances, that supplies of necessities were not supplies. I am ready to disbelieve my eyes, for they have often deceived me; I am ready to discredit my ears, for they have misled me; but I cannot disbelieve my personal experience, especially when it does not consist of a few scattered incidents, but of a chain of facts. The Lord has listened to my voice when I have cried to Him, and this I know as certainly as I know that I have lived upon this earth; therefore I believe that "my God will hear me" in the present and in the future.

III. I close with a third head. Let us consider

THE EXERCISE OF THIS CONFIDENCE

in prayer. I have shown you the results of this confidence, and some few of the reasons for it; now let us see whither the exercise of this confidence leads us. What are we doing when we carry this assurance into action? Our confidence that the Lord hears prayer is seen in our *looking to Him first and foremost at all times.* For our eternal salvation we look to God alone, accepting that divine system in which, by water and by blood, we are saved from sin, through faith. Our confidence does not lie in our own resolves, or moral virtue, or spiritual attainments, but in Him to whom we cry in prayer, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe." We are glad of the aid of friends in smaller concerns; but even there our first resort is to our God in heaven, for we each one feel this to be his chief defence—"My God will hear me."

This also impels us really to pray. Since God will hear us, we will pray to Him, and we do. Alas! we have many

SINS IN REFERENCE TO PRAYER.

Our slackness in prayer, and our unbelief as to prayer, are crimes for which we ought to cover our faces with shame; but when we walk with God aright, when we keep His commandments, and abide in His love, then He gives us life, joy, and *power in prayer*, and then we become conscious of success at the throne. That power being bestowed upon us, we come to pray as naturally as a child cries. We ought to have set times for private prayer; it is most healthful that we

should; but I question whether our best prayers are not those which are quite irrespective of time and season. The Lord is always willing; therefore let us be always praying in one form or another. Let us pray, no matter what may be the trial, no matter what the joy, no matter what the company. Pray without ceasing, because it is always true—"My God will hear me." You know how it was said of a holy man as he walked the streets, "There goes the man that can have anything of God that he pleases to ask." This is *the secret of a great life.* Fail here, and you fail everywhere.

As for you, poor souls, who cannot say, "My God," shall I tell you that you may not pray? Far from it. If you have a desire to pray, encourage that desire. Let your heart go up to Him who says to you, "seek ye the Lord while He may be found." Instead of telling you not to pray, I would direct you

HOW TO PRAY.

You have need, first, to have a God to pray to, for till then you cannot say, "*My* God will hear me." God can only be yours in the saving sense by Christ's being yours. Jesus says, "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." God becomes our God by faith which appropriates Him as He is revealed in His Son Jesus Christ. Look to Jesus, for He is the mercy-seat, and so the way to God in prayer. The Gospel that we have preeched to you is not "Pray," but "Believe": "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Then, being saved, you will be able to pray with assurance of prevailing. Come to

God by the blood of Jesus, and so shall a sinner's prayer be heard. Here, on this spot I charge thee cry, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." Let that request be silently offered, even though thou darest not lift thine eye to heaven. Come, brethren, let us all offer it, and then there shall come to each of us a justification far sweeter and larger than if we should stand aloof from sinners and say, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men." O my Lord, hear Thou this my prayer, that those who hear or read this sermon may be able to say, even as Thine unworthy servant most boldly says, "*My God will hear me.*" Grant it, I pray Thee, for Jesus' sake.

VI.

A PORTRAIT AND A PROMISE.

TEXT—"*To this man I will look, even to him that is poor and . . . . trembleth at My word.*" *Isa. 66 : 2.*

A GALLERY OF ACCURATE PORTRAITS. — SAINTS IN LOW ESTATE. — PEOPLE WHO TREMBLE AT GOD'S WORD. — I. WHO THEY ARE. — NOT A PROUD PEOPLE. — NOT INDIFFERENT. — NOT CRITICAL. — NOT PRESUMPTUOUS. — NOT BOASTERS OF PERFECTION. — A PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN THE WORD OF GOD. — ARE ACQUAINTED WITH IT. — THE ORIGIN OF THE NAME OF QUAKERS. — II. WHY THEY TREMBLE. — BECAUSE OF GOD'S MAJESTY. — BECAUSE OF THE SEARCHING POWER OF THE WORD. — LEST THEY BREAK THE LAW. — OR MISS THE PROMISES. — III. WHAT GOD COMPARES THEM TO. — WHAT GOD DOES FOR THEM.

PORTRAIT painting is a great art. Many pretend to it, but the masters of the art are few. In the Word of God we have a gallery of portraits so accurate, so striking, that only the hand of the Lord could have drawn them. Most of us have been startled to see our own portrait there. The best of all is, that at the bottom of each likeness we have the Lord's judgment upon the character, so that we are able to form an estimate of what our true condition is before the Lord. Here you have

A MAN DRAWN TO THE LIFE:

he is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at the word of the Lord. Here, also, you have the Lord's estimate of him: "To this man will I look." I hope to dwell chiefly upon the character described in the closing words, "*And trembleth at My word.*"

Support the text by the fifth verse, "Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at His word." This trembling is, in God's esteem, an admirable trait in their character. The glorious Jehovah, from His throne in heaven, speaks of these contrite ones who tremble at His word: and then the prophet takes up the strain, and cries, "Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at His word." It is a very great mercy that there are descriptions of saints given in the Word of God which go very low, and reach the feeblest degrees of grace, and the saddest frames of mind. We find the children of God sometimes upon very high places: their spiritual life is vigorous, and their inward joy is abounding. Yet, we have to thank God that, in His priceless Scripture, He has painted for us portraits of the believer in his low estate.

IN THE PICTURE-GALLERY

of those saved by faith we find Rahab as well as Sarah, and erring Samson as well as holy Samuel. In *the family register of the Lord* we have the names of believers who were weak and sad and faulty. We have instances in the sacred record of undoubtedly gracious men who were in very uncomfortable and undesirable conditions. Men are spoken of as the Lord's people when their souls are sick, when grace is at a very low ebb, and when joy is eclipsed.

"Trembleth at My word." This is the description to which I call your attention. Here are the elect men upon whom the Lord looks, and with whom He dwells. They are not the chivalry of earth, but the chosen of heaven. They are not dancing, but trem-

bling; and yet they have more reason to be happy than those have who laugh away their days.

I. Who are these

PEOPLE THAT TREMBLE

at God's word? I think I hear your hearts crying, "Oh, that we may be numbered among them!" Let me begin to answer the question by telling you who they are not. They are not a proud people: they do not cry, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice!" They are humbly hearing; hearing the word of God, and inwardly reverencing the heavenly monitor. They are no longer careless and reckless, for the voice of the Lord has brought them to their bearings. They have bowed their heads before Jehovah, and they listen with rapt attention to everything that He may speak. They are like the child Samuel when he said, "Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth." They are teachable, and lowly, and by no means belong to the school who correct the infallible.

I must put down the careless in the same list, and say of the Lord's tremblers they are not indifferent people. We have among us a class who cause us great sorrow of heart. They are not likely to jest at God's Word, but yet it has no power over them; they do not scoff at it, but they do not feed on it. They have too much thought and sense to become infidels; but yet they overlook the importance of the truth which they accept. God's book lies in their houses honored, but unread. They do not much trouble to go and hear about its meaning; or if, through custom, they become attendants at the house of God, they hear the

Gospel, but it goes in at one ear and out of the other. There is no practical regard to it, no weighing it, no considering it, no meditating upon it, no applying it to the conscience and the daily life. Those cannot be said to tremble at God's Word who neglect the great salvation. These were

NOT A CRITICAL PEOPLE.

They trembled at the Word, and did not sit down on the throne of usurped infallibility, and call the Scriptures to their bar. There are men abroad nowadays—I grieve to say some of them in the ministry—who take the Bible, not that it may judge them, but that they may judge it. Their judgment weighs in its balance the wisdom of God Himself. They talk exceeding proudly, and their arrogancy exalteth itself. O friends, I know not how you feel about the prevailing scepticism of the age, but I am heart-sick of it! I shun the place where I am likely to hear men who do not tremble at God's Word.

"Oh, but surely you are open to conviction?" they say. We are open to no conviction that shall be contrary to the

TRUTH THAT HAS SAVED US

from going down to the pit. We are open to no conviction that shall rob us of our eternal hope, and of our glorying in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. We do not deliberate, for we have decided. To be forever holding the truth of God as though it might yet turn out to be a lie were to lose all the comfort of it. To be forever prepared to desert our Lord and Master, to follow some brand-new philosopher,

would be perpetual disloyalty. Nay, we have not come thus far at a guess. We have known our Lord and His truth for these forty years, and it is not may-be or may-not-be with us now. We neither speculate, nor hesitate; but we know whom we have believed, and by His grace we will cleave to Him in life and in death.

Those who tremble at God's word are not presumptuous people, who derive fictitious comfort from it. We meet at times with a vain-confident man, who puts behind his back every warning and threatening, and only appropriates to himself every promise, though the promise be not made to him. Some of God's dearest children are so afraid of presumption that they go too far the other way, and hardly dare to be as confident as they might. Some of the holiest people that I know are afraid to say what they might say; for they scarcely dare to call themselves the children of God. On the other hand, I have heard others say what I fear they never ought to have said, for they have boasted that they never had a doubt. I heard one minister of great experience, who believes in

THE DOCTRINE OF PERFECTION,

assert very plainly that he had lived in the midst of the church of God for many years, and that he had seen many persons who claimed to be perfect, but he did not think that any one agreed with them; and, on the other hand, he had known intimately certain other persons whom he thought to be as nearly perfect as men could be, but in every case they had been the first to disown all notion of personal perfection, and

mourned their own conscious imperfection. That is my observation also. I distrust the men who publish their own perfection: *I do not believe one of them*, but think less of them than I care to say. There is too much brass, and too little gold, about the perfection of the present day. It hath a brazen forehead, and hath a way of sitting by the roadside—a way which in old time belonged not to true purity. I had rather tremble at God's word than testify to my own excellence.

I have largely told you what these tremblers are not; and I must now tell you a little of what these people are. They are

PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE

that there is a revealed Word of God. There are plenty of persons who profess and call themselves Christians, and yet do not believe that this sacred Book is the very Word of God. Say that it is inspired, and they answer, "So is the Koran, and so are the Vedas." They talk after this fashion: "This is the religious book of the ancient Hebrew nation. A very respectable book it is, but infallible, certainly not: the very Word of God, certainly not." Well, then, we distinctly part company with such talkers. We can have no sort of fellowship with them in any measure or degree with regard to the things of God. They are to us as heathen men and publicans. If we are to come under the head of those that tremble at God's word, we must believe that there is a Word of the Lord to tremble at, as we do most assuredly believe, let others talk as they may.

They are a people who are acquainted with God's Word. An

INTELLIGENT APPRECIATION

of the Word of God can alone make a man tremble at it; and the more he understands it, the more cause for trembling will he see in it. Ay, and the more he enjoys it, the more will he tremble. The highest joy which it yields to mortal men is attended with a reverent awe, and a holy trembling before God. If the believer went beyond the enjoyment of the literal Word, and saw the Incarnate Word Himself, in all the splendor of His person, he would tremble still more: for what said John? "When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead." A sight of the Incarnate Word would create even a greater trembling than the full understanding of the Word as it is written and revealed. Yet such trembling is a sign of grace, and by no means to be censured.

But what meaneth this trembling? Believe me, it does not mean a slavish fear. They that tremble at God's Word at the first may do so, because the Word threatens them with death. But afterwards, as they advance and grow in grace, and become familiar with the God of love, and enter into the secret of His covenant, they tremble for a very different reason. They tremble because they have a holy reverence of God, and consequently of that Word in which resides so much of the power and majesty of the Most High. These are they that reverence the Word, who would not have a syllable of it touched, who regard it as being divine after its measure, and therefore sacred as

George Fox, the famous founder of the Society of Friends, was called a "Quaker" for no other reason than this: that often, when the Spirit of God was upon him, and he spoke the Word with power, he would quake from head to foot beneath the burden of the message. It is an honorable title. No man need be ashamed to quake when Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." In the presence of God a man may well tremble. Surely he is worse than the devil if he does not: for the devils believe and tremble. Demons go the length of that: and he that knoweth God, and hath any sense of His infinite power, and inconceivable purity and justice, must tremble before Him. I believe George Fox not only quaked himself, but he made others quake: and if we tremble at God's Word, we shall make others tremble. True power, when it rests upon us, will discover our own weakness, but it will not be hindered thereby.

II. I have described these tremblers so far as my scant knowledge and brief time will allow: the time has now come to inquire,

WHY DO THEY TREMBLE?

I have been trenching upon this field of inquiry already. They do not tremble because they are going to be lost. Those who are going to be lost are pretty generally free from trembling: "there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm." I would, my hardened hearer, that you did tremble; and because you do not tremble for yourself I tremble for you. Oh, that you judged yourself, that you

might not be judged! I would that you condemned yourself, that God might acquit you; I would that you were horribly afraid; for then the great cause for fear would be over. See how the text blesses all the contrite and the trembling; and, when you have seen it, seek to be among them.

God's people tremble, first, because of His exceeding majesty. Note what becomes of Ezekiel, of Daniel, of Habakkuk, of John the beloved, when they had visions of God. No man could see God's face and live. There must always be some sort of a cloud between. Through the veil of Christ's manhood

WE SEE GOD AND LIVE.

But God absolutely is beyond all creature ken—the sight were far too much for us. Even a glimpse of His skirts is something overwhelming! They that have seen God at any time have trembled at Him and at His Word. For the Word of the Lord is full of majesty. There is a divine royalty about every sentence of Scripture which the true believer feels and recognizes, and therefore trembles before it.

They tremble at the searching power of God's Word. I can personally bear my witness to the way in which the solemn word of the Lord makes my whole soul tremble to its centre. The word of the Lord has cut very close sometimes with many of you, and made you cry, "Am I saved or not?" The man that did never tremble before the Lord does not know Him. It is very easy to take the matter of your soul's salvation for granted, and yet to be mistaken. It is infinitely better to ask your way twenty

times than miss your road home. And I do not blame the man who with holy anxiety says, "Is it so, or is it not so? for I want to know and to be sure." O beloved, I am not sorry that you tremble before the refining fire of sacred truth; I should be much distressed if you did not.

He that knoweth the Lord aright also trembles with fear lest he should break God's law. He sees what a perfect law it is, and how spiritual it is, and how it

OVERLAPS HUMAN LIFE,

and the man cries, "It is high; I cannot attain unto it; O my God, help me, I pray Thee." "Oh," says one, "if he trembles like that, it shows he does not know the love of God." It shows that he does know it. Have you heard of the boy whose father was exceedingly fond of him? He was asked by some other boys to go and rob an orchard with them, but he said, "No, I will not go." They replied, "Your father won't scold you, nor beat you; you may safely come." To this he answered, "What! do you think because my father loves me, that therefore I will grieve him? No, I love him, and I love to do what he wishes me to do. Because he loves me, I fear to vex him." That is like the child of God. The more he knows of God's love, the more he trembles at the thought of offending the Most High.

We, also, tremble *lest we should miss the promises* when they are spread out before us, sparkling like priceless gems. We hear of some wno "could not enter in because of unbelief;" and we are taken with trembling lest we should be like them. We tremble

lest there should be any passage of Scripture or doctrine of revelation that we are not able to believe; we pray for grace that we may never stagger at anything in the Word. We tremble lest we should misbelieve; and tremble more—if you are as I am—lest we should mistake and misinterpret the Word. You and I, who are ambassadors for God, must not trifle, but we must tremble at God's Word.

III. Now we have got through the description of these trembling ones, and we have shown why they so exceedingly fear and quake, our third question was to be, What does God compare them to? Hearken, for here is a thing to be noted and thought upon. The Lord compares the tremblers at His Word to a temple. "Where is the house that ye build unto Me? and where is the place of My rest? To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word."

THEY ARE HIS TEMPLE.

And to the Jews the temple was something very wonderful. There stood the holy and beautiful house, the joy of the whole earth—lined with unrotting wood, and overlaid with pure gold, and its hewn stones put together without hammer or axe. To the Israelite's mind there never was such a building before. Yet the glorious Jehovah speaks lightly of the temple, and says, "Where is the house that ye build unto Me? and where is the place of My rest? To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word."

Note that the Lord does not merely compare us

with the temple, but He prefers us to the temple; and further, He prefers us even to the great temple of the universe not made with human hands, which He Himself sets so much above the house that Solomon built. The Lord says, "The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool;" and yet He seems to say, "All this is not My rest, nor the place of Mine abode; but with this man will I dwell, even with him that trembleth at My Word." It is a sublime comparison; ye are the temples of God, and something more. The more you study these verses, the more you will be astonished.

And what does God say He will do? He saith, "*To this man will I look*"—look first *with approval*. The Lord seems to say, "I will not look on proud Pharisees; I will not look upon the presumptuous; but I

WILL LOOK ON THE LOWLY,

trembling truster. I will fix My eye upon him; he shall be countenanced by Me. I will lift up the light of My countenance upon him. He is right with Me, and I will show Myself gracious to him." It is right that the creature should tremble at the Creator; right that the sinner should tremble before his Judge; right that a child should give due honor to his august Father; therefore will the Lord look upon such a one with approval.

The text means, next, that He will look upon him with care. You know how to use the expression, "I will look to him;" thus will God look to the man that trembles at His Word. You that can stand alone

may look to yourselves; but he that trembles shall have God to look to him. When you are afraid, cry, "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe," and your tottering footsteps shall be firmer than a giant's tread. When you grow so self-satisfied that as the young man you can run without weariness, you shall both weary and fall. Oh, trust not in yourselves, but tremble before the Lord, and He will look to you, and see that no evil shall come nigh unto you!

He that goes through life fearing has

NOTHING TO FEAR.

"Happy is the man that feareth alway," says the Word of the Lord. He that is afraid of falling under trial, and cries, "Lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil," he shall be kept from sin; but he who rashly rushes into temptation shall fall by it. He who watches by day as well as by night, puts on his armor when there seems to be no war, and carries his sword always drawn even when there is no enemy visible, oh, that is the man who shall cope with the deadly enemy of souls! The Holy Ghost is in him, and the Lord has regard unto him; he shall not fall by the hand of the enemy. Though oftentimes he trembles, he shall be safe at last. Glory shall thus be given to God that helped him. The self-confident would not have glorified God if he had succeeded, for he would have thrown up his cap inside the gates of heaven, and magnified his own name. As for this man, he doffs his crown. "*Non nobis, Domine*," he cries, when he enters heaven. "Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord," is still his cry. Unto Him that

loved us and washed us from our sins in His blood; unto Him that kept us from falling, and preserved us to His kingdom and glory, unto Him shall be all honor. Every man who this day trembles at God's Word says, "Amen" to this. God bless you, My beloved! The Lord Himself look to you, and dwell with you!

VII.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE SPIRIT.

TEXT—"*The Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*" *John 14 : 17.*

THE TEACHER OF TRUTH. — WORKS TRUTHFULNESS. — SIGNS SURELY FOLLOWING. — THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE WORLD AND THE CHRISTIAN. — I. THE SPIRIT KNOWN BY BELIEVERS. — THROUGH BELIEVING WHAT IS TAUGHT BY CHRIST. — BY THE SPIRIT'S OPERATIONS. — CONVINCING, COMFORTING, GUIDING. — AS A PERSON. — II. THE SPIRIT KNOWN THROUGH HIMSELF. — ALL OTHER MEANS INADEQUATE. — III. A SACRED INTIMACY. — IN THE CHURCH. — IN THE HOME. — IN THE BODY. — IV. THE INTIMACY TO CONTINUE.

THE part of the text on which we shall meditate is this: "The Spirit of truth; ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Observe that the Holy Spirit is here called the Spirit of truth. There is much meaning in this expression. He is the teacher of truth, unalloyed truth, practical, divinely effective truth. He never teaches anything but the truth. If it comes from the Spirit of God, we may receive it from Him without any hesitation.

He is the Spirit of truth in this sense, too, that He works truthfulness in His people. In those with whom the Holy Ghost works effectually "there is no guile;" they are open-hearted, honest, sincere, and true; they have an intense affection for the truth, and a zeal for it. They are by His truthful influence preserved from error. As He is the Spirit of truth, we

may be sure that whatever He sets His seal upon is true. He will only bear witness to truth; but He will not assist in maintaining error. Mark this word: careful observation will show that in proportion as the nominal Church of the present day has departed from the truth of God, the Spirit of God has departed from her. He can never set His seal to a lie; the testimony of His sacred operation, in

"SIGNS FOLLOWING,"

is borne only to the truth of God. Let us not talk, as some do, as if Scriptural doctrine were of little or no consequence; for where the doctrine is not of God, the Spirit of truth is grieved, and He will depart from such a ministry. Except we keep close to the words of the Lord Jesus, and the revelation of the inspired Book, the Spirit of truth will show His displeasure by refusing to us our utterances. In vain your music, your architecture, your learning, and your "bright services," if the truth be given up.

This is the distinction between the men of the world and the disciples of Christ. The world knows nothing of the Holy Spirit; but the disciples of Christ know Him; for the Lord Jesus saith, "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Forms of Church government, and modes of worship, may be important in their own place: but before the Lord the infallible test is this—Do you bear the fruit of the Spirit of God in you? Doth He indwell you? "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His"; but he that hath the Spirit dwelling within his soul, he it is that is a true-born heir of heaven.

I. To come close up to my subject the first head will be

BELIEVERS IN JESUS KNOW

the Holy Spirit. They know Him, to begin with, *by believing what has been taught them concerning the Comforter by the Lord Jesus Christ.* When Jesus Christ had taught His people concerning the Holy Spirit, and they had received His teaching, He said, "Ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." If they had refused the sayings of Christ, if they had possessed no love, if they had not kept His commandments, if they had arrogantly resolved to find out this mystery for themselves by their own thinking, apart from the instruction of their Master, they would not have known the Spirit of God. We must begin our acquaintance with the Spirit by sitting at the feet of Jesus, and accepting His testimony as sure.

We know the Holy Spirit, next, by His operations upon us. We not only know about His operations, but we have been the subjects of them. All those who are true disciples of Christ have felt a divinely supernatural power working upon them. First, the Holy Spirit operates to our spiritual quickening. There was a time when we were dead in trespasses and in sins: holy feeling was unknown to us, and the life of faith was far from us. At that time we did not desire nor even know spiritual things: we were carnally minded, and the carnal mind knoweth not the things which be of God. The Spirit of God came upon us, and we were awakened, aroused,

MADE TO LIVE.

Many of us can distinctly remember when we passed from death unto life. With others the visible life may have been made manifest more gradually, but even in them there was a moment when the vital force entered the soul, and they can now rejoice that they have been quickened who were once spiritually dead. You know the Spirit in measure when He breathes upon your dead heart, and it begins to throb with the heavenly life. In connection with that quickening there was conviction of sin. This revelation is the effect of light, the light of the Spirit of God; and when He convinces us of sin we begin to know Him.

When, after having convinced us of sin, He leads us to repentance, and to faith in Jesus Christ, then we know Him! How many a promise did some of you hear, but you could not receive it! How many a comforting discourse did you listen to, and yet it did not comfort you! but when the Spirit of God came, as in a moment, you saw Jesus as the consolation of Israel, the Friend of sinners, the atoning Sacrifice, the Surety of the covenant of grace, and sweet peace came streaming into your soul! At that time you did not only know that the Holy Spirit leads to Jesus Christ, but you knew that He was leading *you*. In that respect you knew Him by experimental acquaintance, which is

THE BEST OF KNOWLEDGE.

Since that time, beloved brethren, we have known the Holy Spirit in many ways: restraining from evil, stimulating to good, instructing, consoling, directing,

and enlivening. He has been to us full of the Spirit of reviving; we have grown dull and cold and sleepy, but no sooner has the Spirit visited us than we have felt all alive—bright, cheerful, and intense. Then our whole heart has run in the ways of God's commands, and we have rejoiced in His name. How true is that word, "He restoreth my soul"! Thus have we known the Holy Spirit by His operations within us.

I specially note that we also know Him as the comforter. Alas for the disturbance of heart which we receive in the world; perhaps even in the family! Few things, it may be, are as we could wish, and therefore we are sore troubled; but when the Spirit of God comes, peace flows to us like a river, and Jesus breathes on us and says, "Peace be unto you." Do you know that peace? Many saints of God have enjoyed a heavenly calm upon their sick-beds; when pain would else have distracted them, the Spirit of God has rested them in Jesus. I have heard of one saint near his end who asked, "Is this dying? Then I should like to keep on dying forever." May God give us the Holy Spirit as our Comforter! Happy knowledge!

I trust that we have oftentimes known the Holy Spirit as

GUIDING US

in various ways. I will not speak largely upon this, for some might not understand it; but I know of a surety that the Holy Spirit does give to His favored people hints of things to come. I say not that any man is inspired to tell the future; but I do say that

choice saints have received preparations for the future, and foreshadowings of their coming experiences. When believers come into difficult circumstances, they bow the knee, and cry for guidance, even as David said, "Bring hither the ephod." The oracle is not dumb, but in some way, not always to be explained, the Spirit of God guides our steps through life, if we are willing to obey His monitions. Is it not written, "Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it"? The

DIVINE COMMUNICATIONS

of the Holy Spirit are the precious heritage of true saints; but they are a peculiar voice to their own souls, and are not to be repeated.

But I do not think we have entered the centre of the text even yet. "Ye know *Him*," says the text: ye know not only His work, but Himself. I may know the great achievements of an artist in marble, but I may not know the sculptor himself. I may know a man's paintings, and therefore I may guess somewhat of his character, but yet I may not know the man himself. "Ye know Him," says our Lord; and truly we know the Holy Ghost as to His personality. If the Holy Ghost were a mere influence, we should read, "Ye know *it*." Let us always shun the mistake of calling the Holy Ghost "*it*." *It* cannot do anything. *It* is a dead thing; the Holy Ghost is a living, blessed Person, and I hope we can say that we know Him as such. Others may doubt His personality; but we believe in the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ, and behold in the names given to Him,

the emotions ascribed to Him, and the acts performed by Him, abundant proofs of His sacred personality.

II. The second head is this: *Believers know the Holy Spirit through Himself.* Let us read the text again: "Ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." It is not, "Ye know Him; for ye have heard gracious preaching;" nor, "Ye know Him; for ye have read about Him in the Scriptures." No—"Ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." The moon cannot help us to see the sun, nor can man reveal God. God can only be

SEEN IN HIS OWN LIGHT.

No one can reveal the Holy Spirit but the Holy Spirit. I thought, this morning, coming along—I have to preach about the Holy Spirit; but what can I do without the Holy Spirit Himself? I can only preach aright concerning Him by His own presence with me; and if He be not there, I shall only darken counsel by words without knowledge. Why is it that we know the Holy Ghost only by the Holy Ghost?

I answer, first, on account of the inadequacy of all means. By what methods can you make a man know the Holy Ghost? He is not to be discerned by the senses, nor preceived by eyes or ears. What if the preacher should be as eloquent as an angel, in what way would that make you know the Holy Ghost? You would probably remember more of the man than of his subject. Nothing is more to be deplored than a hungering after mere oratory. No outward ordi-

nances can reach the point any more than human speech. We greatly rejoice in the baptism of believers, and in the breaking of bread, in which the death of the Lord Jesus is set forth before us; but in what symbol could we fully see the Holy Spirit? It is not possible for God to reveal Himself fully by His works: He is seen only by Himself. Hence the Son of God Himself has come to us as "God with us." In Him we see God. The Holy Spirit must Himself come into the heart to which He

MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN.

The facts of the case prove this. I shall put it to any believer here who can humbly say, "I know Him; for He dwelleth with me, and is in me." How do you know the Holy Ghost but by the Holy Ghost? Did you learn your religion of me? Then you have it all to unlearn. Did you learn it out of a book? You have need to begin again. Did you inherit it from your parents, or borrow it from your friends? Then you are still ignorant of the vital point. God is only known through Himself; the Holy Spirit by the Holy Spirit. Have you not found it so in your own case? Why, you have sat and heard a sermon which was in itself cheering, comforting, and quickening; for your neighbor said, "What a happy time we have enjoyed!" Alas! you thought you had never felt more stupid and lifeless. Have you not gone down the Tabernacle steps, and said to yourself, "I am as hard as stone, and as cold as a Winter's fog. What shall I do?" Thus you are without the Spirit of God; but when the divine Spirit comes upon you, such

complaints are at an end; then doth the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb is made to sing. Then are you full of living joy in listening to the Gospel; every word you hear seems to be on wheels; and towards you the cherubim fly swiftly, bringing live coals from off the altar.

III. My third head is, believers enjoy

A SACRED INTIMACY

with the Spirit of God. I am not going to withdraw that word intimacy. It is warranted by the language of our Lord; for He says, "Ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." First, He says, "He dwelleth with you." The Holy Spirit is now upon earth, the vicar and representative of the Lord Jesus Christ, who said, "I will send you another Comforter"—that is another Helper and Advocate, like Himself. Consider how our Lord dwelt with His disciples; for after the same fashion the Spirit of truth dwells with us. Jesus permitted to His disciples the most intimate intercourse with Himself; they ran to Him with their troubles, they told Him their difficulties, they confessed their doubts. He was their Master and Lord, and yet He washed their feet. He ate and drank with them, and permitted the freest intercourse. You never find our Lord repelling their approaches, or resenting their familiarities. He did not draw a ring round Himself and say, "Keep your distance!" Now, in the same manner, the Spirit of truth deals with believers. "He dwelleth with you."

Dwelling with us, He is in our assemblies. It is He who fulfils the promise of our Lord, "Lo, I am with

you alway, even unto the end of the world." He also comes into our homes—"He dwelleth with you." Where do you dwell, O true believer? Is it in a very poor lodging? "He dwelleth with you." It may be, dear friend, you live on board ship, and are tossed upon the sea; but "He dwelleth with you." Perhaps you go to work in a mine, far beneath the surface of the earth; still, "He dwelleth with you." Many choice saints are bed-ridden, but the Spirit dwells with them. I commend to all of you who love the Lord these gracious words: "He dwelleth with you."

The second sentence runs, "He shall be in you." This is

A GREATER MARVEL.

"Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost?" Take care of them; never defile them; let not the idea of drunkenness, gluttony, or lust come near you; for it is written, "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." With what reverence should we look upon the body, now that it has been redeemed by the Lord Jesus, and is indwelt by the Holy Spirit! The Spirit also dwells within your minds. We possess Him, and He possesses us. "He shall be in you," as a king in his palace, or a soul in its body. I am afraid that many professors know nothing about this. I must be talking nonsense, in the esteem of some of you; if it seems nonsense, let that fact condemn you. You cannot be right before God unless the Spirit of God be in you, in your mind, your heart, your desires, your fears, your hopes, your inmost life.

Brethren, when our Lord Jesus Christ came upon the earth, and was beheld as God in human flesh, that was to us *the pledge* of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in us: for, as God dwelt in the human person of the Lord Jesus Christ, even so doth the Spirit abide in our humanity. Our Lord's life on earth was *the picture* of the Spirit's indwelling. As He was anointed of the Spirit, even so are we in our measure. "He went about doing good." He lived consecrated to God, loving the sons of men; and thus will the Spirit of God within us cause us to live: we shall imitate Christ through the Spirit.

When our Lord rose from the dead we had *the guarantee* that even so the Spirit of God would quicken our mortal bodies, and renew us into newness of life. But it was when our Lord ascended up on high, leading captivity captive, that the Holy Spirit was, *to the full, actually given.*

Your ascended Lord gives you this token of His love—the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in you: prize it above all things. Do you know it? It seems like an impertinance for me to put this question to some of you, who are grayheaded, and yet there is need. I trust you knew the Holy Spirit before I was born; but yet I cannot help pressing the inquiry, for you may not know Him even now. I have urged the question upon myself, and therefore I urge it upon you. Does the Spirit of truth dwell in you? If not, what will you do?

IV. I come to a conclusion with one more observation. Believers shall have

of the Spirit's intimacy. "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Mark well the increase. Is it not a blessed step from *with* to *in?* "He dwelleth with you"—that is, a friend in the same house; "and shall be in you," that is, a spirit within yourself; this is nearer, dearer, more mysterious, and more effective by far. The bread yonder is "*with*" me. I eat it, and now it is "*in*" me. It could not nourish me until it advanced from "with" to "in." What a distinct advance it is for the child of God when he rises from the Spirit of God being *with* him to the Spirit of God being *in* him! When the Spirit of God helped the apostles to work miracles, He was *with* them; but when they came to feel His spiritual work in their own souls, and to rejoice in the comfort which He brought to them, then He was *in* them.

As we have noticed the increase, so remark the continuance: "He *shall be* in you." There is no period in which the Holy Spirit will have finished His work so as to go away and leave the believer to himself. Our Saviour says of the Comforter, that He "shall abide with you for ever." Grieve not the Spirit of God, I pray you; quench Him not, resist Him not, but carefully cherish in your hearts this divine word, "He shall be in you." What comfort is here! You dread the days of age and infirmity, but "He shall be in you." You tremble before that trial which threatens you, but "He shall be in you." You do not know how you will answer the gainsayer; take no thought what you shall speak, it shall be

given you in the self-same hour what you shall speak, for He shall be in you. And when the last moment approaches, when you must breathe out your soul to God, the living Spirit who dwelleth with you shall then be *in* you, and by His living power within, shall transform death into

THE GATE OF ENDLESS LIFE.

This is our great reliance for the future upholding of the Church as a whole, and of each individual believer: the Spirit of God dwelleth with us, and shall be in us. The Church of God will never be destroyed; the gates of hell shall not prevail against her; for the Holy Ghost dwelleth with us, and shall be in us to the end of the world. This is the reliance of the child of God personally for his perseverance in grace. He knows that Jesus lives, and therefore he shall live; and the Holy Spirit is within him, as the life of Christ, which can never die. The believer pushes on, despite a thousand obstacles, knowing that God gives him the victory through the Lord Jesus Christ, out of whose hand none can pluck him.

I have done; and yet I have done nothing unless the Spirit of God shall bless the word spoken. Oh, that some of you who have never known the Spirit of God, may feel His power coming upon you at this moment! Come, Holy Spirit. Come even now. Let us implore His presence and power. Pray for a closer, clearer knowledge of Him, O ye children of God. Pray also that sinners may be met with by His grace. The first token of the Spirit's work will be that they will begin to feel their sin, and cry for

mercy; and when that is done, the glad tidings of pardon are for them. To them we say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." The Lord make the word effectual, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

VIII.

TWO ESSENTIAL THINGS.

TEXT—"*Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Acts 20 : 21.*

A PURITAN PREACHER'S SOBRIQUET. — THE DOOR AND DOOR-POST. —I. A REPENTANCE NOT TOWARD GOD.—PRODUCED BY SHAME. — BY PAINFUL CONSEQUENCES. — BY DREAD OF HELL.— BY A SENSE OF THE UNWORTHINESS OF AN ILL LIFE. — PARTIAL REPENTANCE. — A COBBLER'S DEBTS PAID. — II. REPENTANCE TOWARD GOD.— CONSCIOUSNESS OF NEGLECTING GOD. — OF OFFENDING HIM. — OF SIN AS SIN. — III. REPENTANT SINNERS PERMITTED TO BELIEVE. — IV. REPENTANCE LINKED TO FAITH.— THE RESULT OF AN UNPERCEIVED FAITH.—THE GEMINI OF THE HEAVENS. — GROW TOGETHER. — INCREASE EACH OTHER.—A FORGETFUL MINISTER.

THIS was the practical drift of Paul's teaching at Ephesus, and everywhere else. He kept back nothing that was profitable to them; and the main profit he expected them to derive from his teaching the whole counsel of God was this, that they should have "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." This was the great aim of the apostle. I pray that it may be so with all of us who are teachers of the Word; may we never be satisfied if we interest, please, or dazzle; but may we long for the immediate production, by the Spirit of God, of true

REPENTANCE AND FAITH.

Old Mr. Dodd, one of the quaintest of the Puritans, was called by some people "Old Mr. Faith and Repentance," because he was always insisting upon these two things. Philip Henry, remarking upon his name, writes somewhat to this effect: "As for Mr. Dodd's

abundant preaching repentance and faith, I admire him for it; for if I die in the pulpit, I desire to die preaching repentance and faith, and if I die out of the pulpit, I desire to die practicing repentance and faith."

Beloved friends, we cannot at this time do without either of these any more than could the Greeks and Jews. They are essential to salvation. Some things *may* be, but these *must* be. Certain things are needful to the *well*-being of a Christian, but these things are essential to the very being of a Christian. If you have not repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, you have no part nor lot in this matter. Repentance and faith must go together to complete each other. I compare them to a door and its post. Repentance is the door which shuts out sin, but faith is the post upon which its hinges are fixed. A door without a door-post to hang upon is not a door at all; while a door-post without the door hanging to it is of no value whatever. What God hath joined together let no man put asunder; and these two He has made inseparable—repentance and faith.

I. Let me observe, in the first place, that there is a repentance which is not toward God. Discriminate this morning. Paul did not merely preach repentance, but repentance *toward God;* and there is a

REPENTANCE FATALLY FAULTY,

because it is not toward God. In some there is a repentance of sin which is produced by a sense of shame. The evil-doers are found out, and indignant words are spoken about them; they are ashamed, and

so far they are repentant, because they have dishonored themselves. If they had not been found out, in all probability they would have continued comfortably in the sin, and even have gone further on in it. It is said that among Orientals it is not considered wrong to lie, but it is considered a very great fault to lie so blunderingly as to be caught at it. Many who profess regret for having done wrong are not sorry for the sin itself, but they are affected by the opinion of their fellowmen, and by the remarks that are made concerning their offence, and so they hang their heads. Do not mistake a little natural fluttering of the heart and blushing of the face, on account of being found out in sin, for true repentance.

Some, again, have a repentance which consists in grief because of the painful consequences of sin. The man has been a spendthrift, a gambler, a profligate, and his money is gone; and now he repents that he has played the fool. Another has been indulging the passions of his corrupt nature, and he finds himself suffering for it, and therefore he repents of his wickedness. There are many cases that I need not instance here, in which sin comes home very quickly to men. Certain sins bear fruit speedily: their harvest is reaped soon after the seed is sown. Then a man says he is sorry, and he gives up the sin for a time; not because he dislikes it, but because he sees that it is ruining him: as sailors in a storm cast overboard the cargo of the ship, not because they are weary of it, but because the vessel will go to the bottom if they retain it. This is regret for consequences, not sorrow

for sin. It is repentance that can never be acceptable in the sight of God.

Some, again, exhibit a repentance which consists entirely of horror at the future punishment of sin. This fear is healthful in many ways, and we can by no means dispense with it. But if this fear goes no further than a selfish

DESIRE TO ESCAPE PUNISHMENT,

no reliance can be placed upon its moral effect. If they could be assured that no punishment would follow, such persons would continue in sin, and not only be content to live in it, but be delighted to have it so. Beloved, true repentance is sorrow for the sin itself; it has not only a dread of the death which is the wages of sin, but of the sin which earns the wages. If you have no repentance for the sin itself, it is in vain that you should stand and tremble because of judgment to come.

Another kind of repentance may be rather better than any we have spoken of, but still it is not repentance toward God. It is a very good counterfeit; but it is

NOT THE GENUINE ARTICLE.

I refer to a sense of the unworthiness of an ill life. I have known persons, upon a review of their past, rise above the grovelling level of absolute carelessness, and they have begun to enjoy some apprehension of the beauty of virtue, the nobleness of usefulness, and the meanness of a life of selfish pleasure. They regret that their story will never be quoted among the examples of good men, who have left "footprints

on the sands of time." Musing upon their position in reference to society and history, they wish that they could blot out the past, and write more worthy lines upon the page of life. Now, this is hopeful; but it is not sufficient. Repentance toward God is the only thing which can effectually cut the cable which holds a man to the fatal shores of evil.

Once more, there is a repentance which is partial. Men sometimes wake up to the notice of certain great blots in their lives. They cannot forget that black night: they dare not tell what was then done. They cannot forget the villainous act which ruined another, nor that base lie which blasted a reputation. The man who only repents of this and that glaring offence, has not repented of sin at all. I remember the story of Thomas Olivers,

THE FAMOUS COBBLER CONVERT,

who was a loose-living man till he was renewed by grace through the preaching of Mr. Wesley, and became a mighty preacher, and the author of that glorious hymn, "The God of Abraham praise." This man, before conversion, was much in the habit of contracting debts, but could not be brought to pay them. When he received grace, he was convinced that he had no right to remain in debt. He says, "I felt as great sorrow and confusion as if I had stolen every sum I owed." Now, he was not repentant for this one debt or that other debt, but for being in debt at all, and, therefore, having a little coming to him from the estate of a relative, he bought a horse, and rode from town to town, paying everybody to whom he

was indebted. Before he had finished his pilgrimage, he had paid seventy debts, principal and interest, and had been compelled to sell his horse, saddle, and bridle to do it. During this eventful journey he rode many miles to pay a single sixpence; it was only sixpence, but the principle was the same, whether the debt was sixpence or a hundred pounds. Now, as he that hates debt will try to clear himself of every sixpence, so he that repents of sin repents of it in every shape. No sin is spared by the true penitent. He abhors all sin.

Though no man is free from the commission of sin, yet every converted man is free from the love of sin. Every renewed heart is anxious to be free from even a speck of evil.

II. I have said enough to show that there is a repentance which is not toward God; and now let us observe that repentance is

REPENTANCE TOWARD GOD.

Lay stress on the words, "*toward God.*" True repentance looks toward God. I will endeavor to show you this. A boy is rebellious against his father. The father has told him such a thing is to be done, and he determines that he will not do it. His father has forbidden him certain things, and he therefore defiantly does them. His father is much grieved, talks with him, and endeavors to bring him to repentance. Suppose the boy were to reply, "Father, I confess that I am sorry for what I have done, because it has deprived me of a good deal of pleasure." That would be a selfish and impudent speech, and show

great contempt for his father's authority. Before he can be forgiven and restored to favor, he must confess the wrong done in disobeying his father's law. He must lament that he has broken the rule of the household; and he must promise to do so no more. There can be no restoration of that child to his proper place in the family till he has said, "Father, I have sinned." He is stubborn, unhumbled, and rebellious till he comes to that point.

Oh sinner, you must repent before God, or you do not repent at all, for here is the essence of repentance. The man repenting sees that he has neglected God. What though I have never been a thief nor an adulterer; yet God made me and I am His creature, and if throughout twenty, thirty, or forty years I have never served Him, I have all that while robbed Him of what He had a right to expect from me. Hear how the Lord cries, "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me." That is where the sin lies.

The penitent man sees that

THE GREATEST OFFENCE

of all his offences is that he has offended God. Many of you think nothing of merely offending God; you think much more of offending man. If I call you "sinners," you do not repel the charge; but if I called you "criminals," you would rise in indignation, and deny the accusation. A criminal, in the usual sense of the term, is on who has offended his fellow man; a sinner is one who has wronged his God. You do not mind being called sinners, because you think little of

grieving God; but to be called criminals, or offenders against the laws of man, annoys you; for you think far more of man than of God. Yet, in honest judgment, it were better, infinitely better, to break every human law, if this could be done without breaking the divine law, than to disobey the least of the commands of God. Knowest thou not, O man, that thou hast lived in rebellion against God? Thou hast done the things He bids thee not to do, and thou hast left undone the things which He commands thee to do. This is what thou hast to feel and to confess with sorrow; and without this there can be no repentance.

To sum up: evangelical repentance is repentance of sin as sin; not of this sin nor of that, but of the whole mass. We repent of the sin of our nature as well as of the sin of our practice. We bemoan sin within us and without us. We repent of sin itself as being an insult to God. Anything short of this is a mere surface repentance, and not a repentance which reaches to the bottom of the mischief. Repentance of the evil act, and not of the evil heart, is like men pumping water out of a leaky vessel, but forgetting to stop the leak. All that is done by way of amendment without a bemoaning of sin because of its being rebellion against God, will fall short of the mark. When you repent of sin as against God, you have laid the ax at the root of the tree.

III. Thirdly, I am going to throw in a bit of my own. I confess that it does not rise to the gloriousfullness of the text, but I use it as a stepping-stone

for feeble footsteps. I thus apologize as I say— Those who have evangelical repentance are

PERMITTED TO BELIEVE

in Jesus Christ. Paul says that he testified of "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ;" and, therefore, where there is repentance, faith is allowable. O penitent sinner, you may believe in the Saviour! While you are laboring under your present sense of guilt, while you are loathing and abhorring yourself, while you are burdened and heavy laden with fears, while you are crushed with sorrow as you lie before the Lord, you may now trust the Lord Jesus Christ. Before you have any quiet of conscience, before any relief comes to your heart, before hope shines in your spirit; now in your direst distress, when you are ready to perish, you may at once exercise faith in Him who came to seek and to save that which was lost. There is no law against faith.

You may pick up courage to believe when you remember this—first, that though you have offended God (and this is the great point that troubles you), that God whom you have offended has Himself provided an atonement. The sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ is practically a substitution presented by God Himself. The offended dies to set the offender free. God Himself suffers the penalty of His law, that He may justly forgive; and that, though Judge of all; He may yet righteously exercise

HIS FATHERLY LOVE

in the putting away of sin. When you are looking to

God with tears in your eyes, remember it is the same God who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and this offended God "so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

We testify to you "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." But that faith must be toward the Lord Jesus Christ. You must look to Jesus, to the substitnte, to the sacrifice, to the mediator, to the Son of God. "No man cometh unto the Father," saith Jesus, "but by Me." No faith in God will save the sinner except it is faith in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. To attempt to come to God without the appointed Mediator, is again to insult Him by refusing His method of reconciliation. Do not so, but let your repentance toward God be accompanied with faith toward our Lord Jesus: you are warranted in thus believing.

IV. And now I come to my last point. Oh, that I might be helped by the Holy Ghost! Here I come back to the text, and get on sure ground. Repentance is linked to faith, and

FAITH LINKED TO REPENTANCE.

We testify not only of repentance toward God, but of faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. *Repentance and faith are born of the same Spirit of God.* The Old Testament, with its law of repentance, must be bound up in one volume with the New Testament of the Gospel of faith. These two, like Naomi and Ruth, say to each other, "Where thou dwellest, I will dwell."

There are two stars called the Gemini, which are always together; faith and repentance are the Twins of the spiritual heavens. What if I liken them to the two valves of the heart? They must be both in action, or the soul cannot live. They are born together, and they must live together.

Repentance is the result of an unperceived faith. When a man repents of sin, he does inwardly believe, in a measure, although he may not think so. There is such a thing as latent faith; although it yields the man no conscious comfort, it may be doing something even better for him; for it may be working in him truthfulness of heart, purity of soul, and abhorrence of evil. No true repentance is quite apart from faith. To the dark cloud of repentance there is a silver lining of faith; yet at the first the awakened soul does not know this, and therefore laments that he cannot believe; whereas, his very repentance is grounded upon a measure of faith.

Repentance is also greatly increased as faith grows. I fear that some people fancy they repented when they were first converted, and that, therefore, they have done with repentance. But it is not so; the higher the faith the deeper the repentance. The saint most ripe for heaven is the most aware of his own shortcomings. As long as we are here, and grace is in active exercise, our consciousness of our unworthiness will grow upon us. When you have grown too big for repentance, depend upon it you have grown

TOO PROUD FOR FAITH.

If there could be such a thing as a man who was a

believer without repentance, he would be much *too big for his boots*, and there would be no bearing him. If he were always saying, "Yes, I know I am saved; I have a full assurance that I am saved," and yet had no sense of personal sin, how loudly he would crow! Faith cheers repentance, and repentance sobers faith. The two go well together. Faith looks to the throne, and repentance loves the cross. When faith looks most rightly to the Second Advent, repentance forbids its forgetting the First Advent. When faith is tempted to climb into presumption, repentance calls it back to sit at Jesus' feet. I will not believe in that faith which has no repentance with it, any more than I would believe in that repentance which left a man without faith in Jesus.

I have almost done; but the thought strikes me, Will these good people go home, and remember about repentance and faith? Let each one ask himself, Have I a repentance which leads to faith? Have I a faith which joins hands with repentance? Mind you do this; for there is a sad aptitude in many hearers to forget the essential point, and think of our stories and illustrations rather than of the practical duty which we would enforce. A celebrated minister, who has long gone home, was once taken ill, and his wife requested him to go and consult an eminent physicean. He went to this physician, who welcomed him very heartily. "I am right glad to see you, sir," said he: "I have heard you preach, and have been greatly profited by you, and therefore I have often wished to have

with you. If I can do anything for you, I am sure I will." The minister stated his case. The doctor said, "Oh, it is a very simple matter; you have only to take such and such a drug, and you will soon be right." The patient was about to go, thinking that he must not occupy the physician's time; but he pressed him to stay, and they entered into pleasant conversation. The minister went home to his wife, and told her with joy what a delightful man the doctor had proved to be. He said, "I do not know that I ever had a more delightful talk. The good man is eloquent and witty and gracious." The wife replied, "But what remedy did he prescribe?" "Dear!" said the minister, "I quite forgot what he told me on that point." "What!" she said, "did you go to a physician for advice, and have you come away without a remedy?" "It quite slipped my mind," he said: "the doctor talked so pleasantly that his prescription has quite gone out of my head." Now, if I have talked to you so that this will happen, I shall be very sorry.

Come, let my last word be a repetition of the Gospel remedy for sin. Here it is. Trust in the precious blood of Christ, and make full confession of your sin, heartily forsaking it. You must receive Christ by faith, and you must loathe every evil way. Repentance and faith must look to the water and the blood from the side of Jesus for cleansing from the power and guilt of sin. Pray God that you may, by both these priceless graces, receive at once the merit of your Saviour unto eternal salvation. Amen.

IX.

WITHIN THE VEIL.

TEXT—"*Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*" *Heb. 9 : 12.*

THE VEIL IN THE TEMPLE.—LIFTED ONCE A YEAR.—JESUS WITHOUT THE VEIL.—IN THE PLACE OF SINFUL MEN.—I. THE SACRIFICE OF HIS ENTERING.—UNIQUE.—SUBSTITUTIONARY.—PERSONAL.—OF TRANSCENDANT VALUE.—ITS REFERENCE TO HUMAN GUILT.—TO GOD.—II. THE MANNER OF HIS ENTRANCE.—THE VEIL RENT.—III. THE OBJECTS OF HIS ENTRANCE.—TO PREPARE THE HEAVENLY PLACES.—AS REPRESENTATIVE OF HIS PEOPLE.—TO PERFECT THEM.—TO ABIDE THERE.—IV. THE GLORIES OF HIS ENTRANCE.—THE REDEMPTION ETERNAL.

UNDER the old covenant the Lord was set forth to the people as dwelling apart, within the veil. A thick tapestry hung before the most holy place, and thus concealed the light which symbolized the presence of God. Within the inner sanctuary Jehovah dwelt apart, and none entered the sacred precincts save one man, and he but once a year. The great teaching was—God is hidden from men; sin has made a division between man and God.

THE WAY OF APPROACH

is not yet made manifest. Yet even then there was a hint given that an entrance would be made manifest; for the division was not a piece of brickwork, nor even an arrangement of cedar overlaid with gold: it was a veil, which, once in the year, was solemnly

lifted, that the high-priest might pass beneath. This hinted that sinful men were yet to be permitted to draw nigh unto the Most Holy God, through the Christ of God.

Now, beloved friends, the priests of old, the holy and the most high place, were only "patterns of things in the heavens;" they were not the things themselves. In them we see instructive types and symbols, but nothing more. How greatly we may rejoice as we read the eleventh verse of the chapter before us! It begins with "But"; and, oh, what a blessed "but" for you and for me! Up till then religion dealt with externals, such as meats and drinks and washings, and carnal ordinances, and priests who could only offer the blood of bulls and of goats; *but* the coming of the Messiah changed all this. We pass from shadow to substance.

Read on: "Christ being come." How the joy-bells ring out—"Christ being come"! It was

THE MUSIC OF BETHLEHEM—

"Christ being come." It was the song of Anna and Simeon—"Christ being come." This will be the joy of the whole earth when once earth understands her truest privilege—"Christ being come." The good things are still to come for many a year; but now "Christ being come," we have them in possession.

The striking point to which I call your attention is this: while our Lord was here, He was comparable to the High-Priest when He stood on the outside of the veil. I want you to recollect that fact. Outside is the place of sinful men. Did the holy Jesus ever

stand there? He did. But after He had presented His sacrifice, after it had been consumed with fire, He passed within the veil, and rose to the throne of the eternal God. He entered heaven as a priest, in all the solemnity of accomplished sacrifice. "By His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption." Upon that august entrance I shall try to speak this morning.

I. First, I shall call your attention to

THE SACRIFICE OF HIS ENTERING.

We note concerning it, first, that the sacrifice presented by our Lord was *unique*. It was "His own blood" that He offered—blood from the veins of a man; but what a man! Remember how He Himself said it: "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not; but a body hast thou prepared Me." The body of Christ was specially prepared of God for this great sacrifice. He was pure and holy, and therefore able to bear the sin of others, since He had none of His own. God especially prepared His body for the indwelling of the Deity, and He stands before us as a personage the like of which neither heaven nor earth containeth. God is a pure spirit, but this sacred Person has a body; man hath no pretensions to divinity, but this glorious One counts it not robbery to be equal with God. He is God and man in one person, by a marvellous unity which we believe but can never comprehend; and as our Mediator, He offered Himself without spot unto God.

The sacrifice of our Lord was, in the highest sense, *substitutionary*. The penalty of sin is death; and

Jesus died. All through the old law there is no atonement, except by the death of a victim. Just as the calves and the bullocks in the type were slain, and their blood poured out before God, so must Jesus be slain in the sinner's place. O beloved, let us cling to the great truth of

THE VICARIOUS SACRIFICE,

which is the chief teaching of this sacred Book. Take this away, and I do not see anything left in the Bible at all which can be called good news. The very soul of the doctrine of Christ is atonement by His death.

The victim was killed, but it was also consumed by the holy fire, upon the altar of God. Our Lord offered up Himself unto God, not only by the death which came from the cross, but by the consuming of soul which came from the horror of bearing human sin. The tempest of sin's consequences burst upon the innocent head of the great Substitute; the thunder-cloud emptied its dire contents upon His soul. He, voluntarily putting Himself in our place, bore the result of that substitution. Out of infinite love, Jesus became an offering for sin. Not of compulsion, but of His own sacred choice, He became the sin-offering for the sinner, that the sinner might be made the righteousness of God in Him, "who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." This we know, and in this great truth we steadfastly abide. What other hope have we?

The sacrifice which our Lord presented before He went within the veil was *personal.* Stress should be laid upon the word "own" here. "Neither by the

blood of goats and calves, but by His *own* blood." The Lord Jesus did not bring before God the sufferings of others or the merits of others, but His own life and death. "He poured out His soul unto death." Our Lord owed nothing to the justice of God on His own account; He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners;" and when

HE TOOK OUR PLACE,

it was that He might voluntarily offer up His own sacrifice, of personal suffering, and personal death, yielding up His whole being as a sacrifice in our stead. When He hangs naked upon the tree, I dare not look; but, with tears in my eyes, I worship. I own with deepest love how absolutely He gave up everything on my behalf, reserving not even a rag *for* Himself, nor an atom *of* Himself. "He saved others; Himself He could not save." It was, in the most emphatic sense, a personal sacrifice.

Even in sympathy we cannot enter the inner shrine of His sacrifice; in their innermost depth they are unapproachable. Jesus treads the wine-press alone. Gethsemane!—who can stand in the garden, and view the bloody sweat, and hear the deep groanings of that mighty heart? Even the favored three are overcome with sorrow, and fall asleep. But as for Calvary, where the darkness was denser still, till mid-day turned to midnight, as an emblem of what was going on; into that awful blackness we cannot peer. "Thine unknown sufferings" still remains one of the best descriptive expressions concerning that which can never be described. All this, I say, was His own

sole, personal grief for sins in which He had no personal share; this was His sacrifice of entrance.

I cannot dwell long on any one point; but, I pray you, treasure these truths, which are more to be valued than the much fine gold. This sacrifice of His was *of transcendent value.* I cannot imagine a limit to the value of the sacrifice of Christ; I hope none of you will ever try to do so. When He gave Himself up as a sacrifice, there was a greater recompense made to the justice of God than if the whole human race had been consumed. When God Himself comes here to stand in the sinner's place, the law obtains a fuller vindication than if worlds of guilty ones had borne its penalty. When the Law-giver Himself bears the penalty of the law-breaking, the law is made honorable, and it is plainly demonstrated that

GOD WILL NOT SPARE

the guilty, but that every transgression must receive its penalty. When even the innocent Substitute is made to die because sin is laid upon Him, we are sure that sin is exceedingly hateful to God. Hence, the sacrifice of our Lord was of transcendent value.

This sacrifice, let men nowadays say what they will, was made in reference to human guilt. His death was not merely an example, nor simply a display of divine love. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." His death dealt with our uncleanness: it cleanseth us from all sin. "Once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." And this had reference to God. Jesus did not die to make God merci-

ful, as some falsely say that we teach; but because God was merciful Jesus died, that there might be a clear passage for divine mercy, without the violation of divine justice. Jesus did not die to make God love sinners, for He always did love them; but that His love might be exercised in consistency with holiness it was needful that the law should be vindicated, and the threatening should not become a dead letter.

II. Let us now notice

THE MANNER OF HIS ENTRANCE.

We are told in the text, "He entered in *once* into the holy place." Much emphasis is to be laid upon that word "once." It has been done, then, *once*. Once has He offered up Himself without spot unto God; once has He lifted the veil, and passed into the holy place of fullest fellowship with God on our behalf. It has been done! Jesus has entered in. Our Head and Representative is with God. It is not a thing to be wrought in the future, but it has been accomplished. His sacrifice had an immediate efficacy. On the spot it availed to open the kingdom of heaven. From the cross the Forsaken One entered into His kingdom as the Beloved of God. To prove how complete was the effect of His sacrifice, He went into the heaven of God at once. "It is finished." The proof is that Jesus entered in within the veil.

It means, however, that it was *only once*. Once only has Jesus made entrance officially into the heavenly places; for, by that one entrance, He has made the way open and manifest. The entrance of our Lord once for all into the holy place has secured the

entrance of His people. It was once, and it cannot be twice, because it was so effectual; and this is set forth by the evangelists, for

THE VEIL WAS RENT.

The holy of holies was laid open; its enclosure was thrown down. What if I say that the inner shrine has expanded itself and taken in the holy place, and now all places are holy where true hearts seek their God? Had our High-Priest merely lifted the veil and passed in, we might have supposed that the veil fell back again: but since the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom, there can be no need for a new entrance; for that which hinders is taken away. No veil now hangs between God and His chosen people: we may come boldly to the throne of grace. Blessed be the name of our Lord who has entered in "once"!

And now, beloved, He has entered into the holy place once in the sense that He has entered in the fullest and most complete manner. When the High-Priest went up to the mercy-seat, he drew near to the symbol of God, but not necessarily near to God Himself. But our Lord Jesus Christ, as Mediator, came so near to God that no nearness could be greater. He always was in His Godhead one with the Father: but as God and man in one person He is now forever with God. He saith, "I and My Father are one." The nearness of the God-man Christ Jesus to His Father is something to think upon with reverent pleasure; for, remember, Christ has gone into the glory of the Father, and He has made a way for us

to enter into like nearness. The road is open, the access is free; God meets us, and invites us to meet Him. He waits to speak to us, as a man with his friend.

III. But now, thirdly, let us consider

THE OBJECTS OF HIS ENTRANCE.

What did our Lord Jesus Christ do by His entrance within the veil? What comes of it? It means, first, that He made atonement within the veil. He cleansed the heavenly places. Albeit that the guilty are taken up to dwell with God, and our poor prayers are accepted of God, neither we nor our prayers carry any defilement into the holy place, because the atoning blood is there beforehand. After heaven hath sucked up into itself so much of the sinnerhood of earth, it remains as pure as it was when only God and His holy angels dwelt therein. While men that were once steeped in sin are permitted to come and sit at the right hand of God, God remains as rigorously righteous as if no guilty one had been forgiven: the great Sacrifice has secured this.

Then, next, He enters there to appear for us. He hath gone there to put in an appearance on our behalf. As in a court of law, when a man appears by his attorney or legal representative he is in the court, even though he may be miles away; so are we, to-day, in possession of our eternal inheritance through Him who has put in an appearance for us. God sees His saints in heaven in the person of their glorious representative. In Him we are raised up together, and made to sit together in the heavenly places. Is not this

a subject for quiet enjoyment? The Forerunner has for us entered upon the purchased possession.

He is there, next, to perfect us. Look at the tenth chapter and the fourteenth verse: "For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." His one sacrifice hath made the comers thereunto perfect; and to show their perfectness, they enter into the holy place. His work is done, else He would not be within the veil; His being there is proof that everything is complete, and that His people are complete in Him. The set-apart ones are accepted, for He in whom they stand is accepted.

He has entered in once, also, that He may abide there. Look at the twelfth and thirteenth verses of the tenth chapter: "But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool." Jesus is with God in glory, and always must be there till the purposes of grace are accomplished. He holds a permanent session at the right hand of the Father in everlasting triumph. Till our representative is expelled from heaven, *we* cannot lose it. As that can never be, look up, O believer, and see where you are, and where you always must be; accepted in the Beloved, made nigh by the blood of Christ!

IV. But now, lastly, let us review

THE GLORIES OF THIS ENTRANCE.

We have seen the sacrifice of our Lord's entrance, the manner of His entrance, and the objects of His entrance; and now let us muse upon the glory of His

entrance, which is this: "having obtained eternal redemption." The words "for us," are supplied by the translators, and therefore we leave them out. Our Lord entered the most holy place "having obtained eternal redemption." When Aaron went in with the blood of bulls and goats, he had not obtained "eternal redemption;" he had only obtained a symbolic and temporary purification for the people, and that was all.

Our Lord enters in because, first, His work is all done. We do not read "He entered in that He might obtain it," but "having obtained." There is no getting redemption out of the Bible. I bless God for this. Many cannot endure the word, but it is there; and it is redemption by price too — "a mercantile transaction," as they profanely speak. "Ye are bought with a price." Redemption is deliverance through payment: in this case, ransom through one standing in another's stead, and discharging that other's obligations. Brethren, when the Lord Jesus Christ died, He paid our redemption price; and when He entered within the veil, He entered as one who not only desired to give us redemption, but as one who had "obtained eternal redemption." He has won for us a redemption both by price and by power.

This is, indeed, a great redemption. We are redeemed from all the bondage that ensued from sin. We are no longer the serfs of Satan, nor the slaves of of the world, neither are we subject to bondage through fear of death. That last enemy shall be destroyed, and we know it. The Son hath set us free,

and we are free indeed. He entered into the heavenly places with this for His everlasting renown, that He has obtained redemption for His people.

When our Lord entered in, He had by His sacrifice also dealt with eternal things, and not with matters of merely passing importance. He offered Himself by the Eternal Spirit, and by that offering He took off the mortgage from the eternal inheritance, and

BADE US FREELY ENTER

upon the predestinated possession. Sin, death, hell —these are not temporary things: the atonement deals with these, and hence it is an eternal redemption. Let me cheer the heart of anyone here who is burdened with sin with this reflection, that the redemption of Christ deals with the whole of past sin. From every soul that has by faith part and parcel in this redemption, all the olden curse of the race is gone. You have no cause to fear the ancient past; nothing lies buried there which can ever rise to accuse you. Who shall lay anything to the charge of him for whom Christ has obtained eternal redemption?

Now, look forward into eternity. Behold the vista which has no end! Eternal redemption covers all the peril of this mortal life, and every danger beyond, if such there be. You know not how much you are to be tempted and tried before the end cometh. Peradventure, you will live to extreme old age, and you dread the decay of intellect, and the increase of infirmity; and well you may. Nevertheless, be glad that He has obtained eternal redemption for you. You cannot possibly outlive the redemption of Christ,

neither can any temptation for which He has not provided by any possibility assail you.

Leap to the end. Think of the future of prophecy. Anticipate the seven trumpets,

THE POURING OUT OF THE DREAD VIALS!

You need not fear any of these, seeing your Lord has obtained eternal redemption. Our Lord has obtained eternal redemption for His people, and we shall rest contented even though the star Wormwood should fall, and the waters should be turned into blood, and all these things should be dissolved. When prophecy is all fulfilled, and we pass into *the dread future*, we fear not death, since our Lord has obtained eternal redemption. "Eternal punishment" is a word of unspeakable terror; but it is met and fully covered by "eternal redemption." Be not afraid, O ye that put your trust in the Lord Jesus as your Sacrifice and Priest! There is nothing in the mystery of eternity that need appall you.

I have done, but let me ask my beloved hearers, one by one, Have you this eternal redemption? Do you believe in the Lord Jesus? He that believeth in Him hath everlasting life, and that is the outcome of eternal redemption. Dost thou believe in the Son of God? Into the holiest of all you may enter; nay, you have entered there already in Jesus, and you are there permanently, because He abides there for ever. Your Substitute, your Covenant Head, your Representative is in the glory, and there thou shalt be ere long. Wherefore, if thou believest in Jesus Christ the Son of God with all thine heart, comfort thyself

with these words. Since the veil is rent, hide not thyself from God who unveils Himself to thee. By and by thou shalt be with Him where He is. Rejoice that even now He is with thee where thou art. The Lord bless this congregation, and may we all meet within the veil around the great Forerunner whom we love and adore! Amen.

X.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY.

TEXT — "*Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?*" *Esther 4:13, 14.*

THE PRE-EMINENCE OF THE ANGLO-SAXON RACE.—ELEVATED FOR A PURPOSE.—THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHURCHES.—INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY NOT MERGED.—FOUR POINTED WORDS.—I. HEARKEN.—A WARNING AGAINST ISOLATION.—SEPARATION IMPOSSIBLE.—THE DANGER OF LIVING IN POLLUTED AIR.—NO MAN ESSENTIAL TO GOD'S PURPOSES.—POSSIBILITY OF LOSING OPPORTUNITY.—II. CONSIDER.—WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN.—SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL WEALTH.—THE CHARACTER OF THE CRISIS.—PREPARATION FOR SPECIFIC WORK.—III. ASPIRE.—LOUIS NAPOLEON'S AMBITION.—NO INSURMOUNTABLE OBSTACLES.—GOD'S LAMPS BEING MADE.—IV. CONFIDE.—SAFETY ASSURED.—A STATESMAN'S SUCCESSFUL FANATICISM.

THE appeal of Mordecai in his pressing time of distress was to one single person, namely to Esther. I believe that I shall do better this morning by making my sermon an address to individuals than by speaking of nations or churches. I assuredly believe that England has been raised up as a nation and brought to her present unique position that she may be the means of spreading the Gospel throughout all the nations. I judge that God has blessed

THE TWO GREAT NATIONS,

of the Anglo-Saxon race—England and the United

States—and given them pre-eminence in commerce and in liberty on purpose that in such a time as this they may spread abroad the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Woe to these nations if they fail to fulfil their solemn obligations! If, being raised up for a purpose, they refuse to perform it, they shall melt away. We are intrusted with great opportunities: if we do not rightly use them the New Zealander of Macaulay may yet survey the ruins of this empire-city. "Thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed," said Mordecai to Esther, and he says the same to us.

We might properly say of any Christian church that it has its own appointed place in the purposes of divine mercy. If the candle is lighted, even though it be set upon a golden candlestick, it is not lighted for itself, but that it may give light to all that are in the house. If any church fails to bless others, and so proves unfaithful to

HER SOLEMN TRUST,

the Lord will take away the candlestick out of its place, and leave the unfaithful to mourn in darkness. The Church in Rome was once a church of high commanding influence for good; you know what it has become. Some other churches are on the way, I fear, to the same dreadful end. God grant that none of the churches with which we are connected as Christian people may ever either apostatize from the faith, or grow lax and worldly, or become indifferent to the glory of God and the salvation of men. I might thus speak to each church and say, "Who

knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

My brethren, it is a wonderfully easy thing to denounce the faults of a government or of a nation, to complain of this being done, and of that being left undone; and this amusement may only serve to divert our conscience from its more profitable duties at home. The same is true with regard to a church. Men are too apt to condemn in the mass what they tolerate in themselves as individuals. But why are we so ready to accuse the churches? Why are we so censorious as to what the churches do, and what the churches are? Who make up the churches? Why, we each one by our influence help to make the churches good, bad, or indifferent, as the case may be. Therefore, I will not waste time in generalities, but I will come to personalities. I will follow Mordecai's tack, and speak alone to Esther, that is to say, to each one who may happen to be here to whom God has intrusted opportunity, talent, and position; I would urge them to remember that there is a something for each believer to do, a work which he cannot delegate to another, a task which it is his privilege to be permitted to undertake, which it will be to his solemn disgrace and detriment if he do not execute, but which will be to his eternal glory under God if he be found faithful in it. I shall lay out my sermon in four parcels, arranging it under four words.

I. The first word is "hearken!" Hearken to my word, as Mordecai desired Esther to hearken to him. Hearken while God the Lord speaks to your heart,

and calls you to your high vocation. Hearken, first, to a question. Brother,

WILL YOU SEPARATE YOUR INTERESTS

from those of your people and your God? I do not think that Mordecai was afraid that Esther would do so; but still it is sometimes as well to prevent an evil before we perceive it; and he did so by saying, "Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house." It was possible that, being a queen, it might enter into her mind that she would be safe even if all the rest of the Jews were put to death. It would be a painful thing that her countrymen should be destroyed, but still the stroke might not touch her in the seclusion of the palace, where she had "not yet showed her kindred nor her people." She would still remain the favored wife of the great king; and she might, therefore, selfishly look to herself, and leave those who were in peril to look to themselves or to their God, while she coldly hoped that the Lord would somehow or other give them deliverance. Does that temptation come across the path of any one of us? It may. You may say, "I shall be saved though the city should perish in its iniquity. Though the people are steeped in poverty and ignorance, I shall enjoy plenty and live in light. I know the Lord, and that is

MY MAIN CONCERN;

if the heathen perish, I am not one of them, and I am thankful that it will not interfere with my destiny." Will you argue in this selfish manner? Do you wish to be joined with Jesus so as to be rescued from hell? I tell you, sirs, there is no receiving Christ unless you

receive His doctrine and rule. You must receive this grace also, namely, that you give yourself to Him to make His interests your interests, His life your life, His kingdom your kingdom, His glory your glory.

Hearken to a second question. If you could separate your interests from those of the cause of God, would you thereby secure them? Is it so, that because you are yourself a member of a flourishing church, and because you enjoy all sorts of Christian privileges, you therefore harden your heart concerning dying churches and desponding saints? Do you imagine that the body can be sick, and yet you as a member of it will not suffer? I tell you, if the Church of God goes aside it will be to your injury; if the truth of God be not preached

YOU WILL BE A LOSER;

if Christian life be not vigorous you will be weakened. When a baneful atmosphere is over other Christians you will breathe it. Sinners cannot be left in their spiritual death without creating *a foulness in the air* which is to the peril of us all. If this great city is left to seethe and rot in its infidelity and misery and filthiness, fancy not that you Christian people will escape. You dwell with these outcasts, and you are already feeling their influence, and will feel it still more if they do not feel yours. How far and how deep that participation will go I will not venture to prophecy, for I am no prophet, neither the son of a prophet; but there are elements now fermenting which threaten, first, the existence of the commonwealth, and next, the liberties of Christian worship. Take you good heed, my

brethren; things cannot long remain as they are. *This great flood of wretchedness must be assuaged, or it will sweep us all away.* This may be a selfish argument; but as we are battling with selfishness, we may fitly takeGoliath's sword with which to cut off his head. You Christian people suffer if the Church suffers; you suffer even if the world suffers.

Next, remember, for your humiliation, that

GOD CAN DO WITHOUT YOU.

Enlargement and deliverance will arise to His people from another place if it come not by us. If the Lord were tied up to any one man, or any one church, or any one nation, it were treasonable for that person, church, or nation to be negligent; but as the Lord waiteth not for man, neither tarrieth for the sons of men, it becomes them to mind what they are at. He can do without *us*. When He looked and there was no man, His own arm brought salvation; and as it was of old, so will it be again, Mark you that. He will effect His purpose; He will fetch home His banished; He will gather together His scattered sheep; He will cause the earth to be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea; and if we do not gather in the wanderers, or spread the knowledge of His grace, it will be done by more faithful men.

Here follows a still more sobering reflection. Recollect, that as God can do without us, it may be He will do without us. It might come to pass that God would say, "I will no more bless the world by this England; she has become

SELFISHLY MERCANTILE;

she cares more for commerce than for righteousness; she is drunken and infidel; I will give her up. Her merchants care nothing for the poor, whose labor is ill-requited; let her pass away, as all oppressors must, and let the nations say, 'Alas! alas! that great city, that mighty city! For in one hour so great riches is come to naught.'" He may say to any church: "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against thee with the sword of my mouth." "Ichabod" has been written aforetime, and may be again, on places where once there shone upon the forefront the inscription—"Holiness unto the Lord." So also any man may be set aside, even as the Lord put away Saul, and said to him, "Thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel." Hearken, I pray you, to this warning from the Lord. Hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord will judge His people, and to whom much is given, of him shall much be required.

Hearken to one thing more. How will you bear

THE DISGRACE,

if ever it come upon you, of having suffered your golden opportunities to be wasted? What if Israel had been destroyed for lack of Esther's intercession? Her name would have been a byword among other nations as a base and traitorous woman. If the people had been spared by some other means, and she had refused her mission, as long as there lived a Jew they would have kept no feast of Purim, but have cursed her memory. When I think of the neglects of

our own ancestors, I am anxious that we take warning by them. There are at this moment straths in the Highlands which are thoroughly Romish. Why? They were not carefully evangelized at the time of the Reformation. If the workers of that period had done their work thoroughly there would have been no Romish valleys in Presbyterian Scotland. Ireland still cowers under the shadow of the Pope; there was a hopeful time when better things were promised, but this was allowed to pass by; and what can be done to rescue Ireland now? Times do not tarry, and tides do not wait; and if we do not avail ourselves of them while they are with us, our sons may lament our neglects.

I fear that the best among us can recollect with regret times which we have suffered to pass over us unimproved. We can never call them back again. You did not train your children; they are men and women now, and will not listen to you. O parents, why did you not speak to them when they would have listened? But what if a whole life should glide away in living for yourselves, in living for your own comfort and enriching? Let every Esther resolve that she will never bring this ban upon her name; let every man, woman, and even child, among us, knowing the Lord, feel that the vows of the Lord are upon us, and that by imperative necessity we must serve according to our capacity the cause of God and truth.

II. I change a little, and the call is now

"CONSIDER."

Consider to what some of you have been advanced.

You have been raised to salvation. What manner of persons ought we to be? You have been raised to that honor, walk worthy of it. If I had said that you had been elevated to be queens, like Esther, it would have been a poor elevation compared with that which you have actually received. Some of you who are the favorites of heaven have leaned your head on Christ's bosom, and have been permitted to sit where angels would wish to be; you are near and dear to Jesus, and espoused to Him in love.

In addition to all this, the Lord has raised some of you out of poverty and brought you to comparative wealth, perhaps to positive wealth; and He has given you positions which once you never dreamed of. To this He adds domestic comfort, and health, and prosperity in all its forms. The Lord has also given you talent. I fear we have all of us more ability than we use—but some have more talent than they themselves are aware of, and this perhaps they display in business, but never in the cause of God.

Thus you are brought to the kingdom; but why is it so? I want you to consider *why the Lord has brought you where you are.* Do you think that He has done it for your own sake? Does He intend all this merely that you may practice self-indulgence? Can this be the design of God? Do not think so. Whatever you have is yours

NOT TO HOARD FOR YOURSELF,

or to spend upon yourself, but that you may use it as a good steward of God. Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom which God has given thee

for such a time as this, when there is need of thee and all that thou hast?

III. Thirdly,

ASPIRE.

"Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Rise to the utmost possible height. Fulfil your calling to its loftiest degree. Not only do all that you are sure you can do, but aim at something which as yet is high up among the questions. Say to yourself, "Who knoweth?" That is what the ambitious man says when he aspires to be great. When Louis Napoleon was shut up in the fortress of Ham, and everybody ridiculed his foolish attempts upon France, yet he said to himself, "Who knows? I am the nephew of my uncle, and may yet sit upon the imperial throne;" and he did so before many years had passed. I have no desire to make any man ambitious after the poor thrones and honors and riches of this world; but I would fain make you all ardently ambitious to honor God and bless men. Who knows? Does anybody know what God may do by you?

Young man, I trust you have given your heart to the Lord; what are you going to do? You have come into some property unexpectedly; or you are promoted in a house of business—what is the meaning of it? "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" I believe that in dark times

GOD IS MAKING LAMPS

with which to remove the gloom. Martin Luther is

sitting by his father's hearth in the forest when the Pope is selling his wicked indulgences; he will come out soon, and stop the crowing of the cock of the Romish Christ-denying Peter. John Calvin is quietly studying when false doctrine is most rife, and he will be heard of at Geneva. A young man is here this morning — I do not know whereabouts he is, but I pray the Lord to make this to be an ordination sermon to him, starting him on his life-work.

Further, "Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" *You do not yourself know.* I speak experimentally, using my own self as an instance in the work which God has enabled me to do. If it had been revealed to me that I should have enjoyed the opportunities which have fallen to my lot, I could never have believed it. If the Lord could use *me*, He can also use *you*. Only stand in a waiting posture, saying, "Here am I, send me!" and you shall see things which you dare not expect. Who knoweth, brother or sister, whether thou art put in thy family to save thy family? Who knoweth whether thou art made to live in a back street to bless that street? Who knoweth whether thou art set down in a forlorn district to upraise that district? Who knoweth whether thou art put into that nation to save that nation? Ay, put into the world in Christ's name to save the world? Aspire to great things for God.

IV. Our fourth word is

CONFIDE.

"Who knoweth whether thou art come to the king-

dom for such a time as this?" If thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this, *be confident that thou art safe.* If God has brought Esther to the throne that she may go in unto the king and save her people—go in, good Esther! Fear not the risk. Fast and pray your three days before you go, but be not dismayed. If the womanhood in you trembles in the prospect of a possible death, let confidence in God override your fears. Cromwell's Ironsides to a man believed in the everlasting purpose, therefore they were invincible, for no fear ever breathed upon them. Though the hosts of the tyrant may be innumerable, yet with

THE WAR CRY,

"The Lord of hosts is with us," we will ride forth conquering and to conquer. Settle it in your mind that the Lord has called you to the work, and then advance without question or fear. Put your hand to the plough, and pause not. Do the work with your might. Do not stand asking how; do it as you can. Do not stand asking when; do it directly. Do not say, "But I am weak"—the Lord is strong.

There was a man who strove in the House of Commons for what he thought would be a great boon to seamen, but he could not prevail. At last he broke through all the rules of the house, and acted like a fanatic, and when everybody saw that the man was so in earnest, that he was ready to faint and die, they said, "We must do something;" and it was done. An enthusiasm which overpowers yourself is likely to overpower others. Do not fail from want of fervor.

Never mind if men think you crazy. When you are overwhelmed yourself, the flood of zeal will bear all opposition before it. When you become so fanatically insane as to be absorbed by a passion for the glory of God, the salvation of men, the spread of truth, and the reclaiming of the fallen masses, there shall be about you the truest sanity and the mightiest force. May you feel such a passion to-day.

XI.

THE BELIEVING THIEF.

TEXT—"*And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*" *Luke 23:42, 43.*

HIS CASE TYPICAL.—SAVED WHEN JESUS WAS AT HIS LOWEST.—HIS POWER GREATER NOW.—THE THIEF'S REMARKABLE FAITH.—I. THE LAST COMPANION OF OUR LORD ON EARTH.—A MAN CONVICTED OF CRIME.—A MAN NEWLY AWAKENED.—IN THE LAST EXTREMITY.—COULD DO NO GOOD WORKS.—SIMPLY TRUSTED, AND WAS SAVED.—II. THE COMPANION OF OUR LORD AT THE GATES OF PARADISE.—BRINGING A SPECIMEN SINNER.—A DREAM OF THE GATES OF HEAVEN.—THE CONVERSION OF VICTORINUS.—III. THE LORD'S SERMON.—TWO THIEVES THERE, BUT ONLY ONE SAVED.—THE NEARNESS OF ETERNAL THINGS.—NOT AN EXCEPTIONAL CASE.

THE story of the salvation of the dying thief is a standing instance of the power of Christ to save, and of His abundant willingness to receive all that come to Him, in whatever plight they may be. The case of the dying thief is much more similar to our conversion than it is dissimilar; in point of fact, his case may be regarded as typical rather than as an extraordinary incident. So I shall use it at this time. May the Holy Spirit speak through it to the encouragement of

THOSE WHO ARE READY TO DESPAIR!

Remember, beloved friends, that our Lord Jesus, at the time He saved this malefactor, was at His lowest. His glory had been ebbing out in Geth-

semane, and before Caiaphas and Herod and Pilate; but it had now reached the utmost low-water mark. Stripped of His garments, and nailed to the cross, our Lord was mocked by a ribald crowd, and was dying in agony; then was He "numbered with the transgressors" and made as the offscouring of all things. Yet while in that condition He achieved this marvellous deed of grace. If a dying Saviour saved the thief, my argument is that He can do even more now that He liveth and reigneth. All power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth; can anything at this present time surpass the power of His grace?

It is not only the weakness of our Lord which makes the salvation of the penitent thief memorable; it is the fact that the dying malefactor saw it before his very eyes. Can you put yourself into his place, and suppose yourself to be looking upon one who hangs in agony upon a cross? Could you readily believe Him to be the Lord of glory, who would soon come to His kingdom? That was no mean faith which, at such a moment, could believe in Jesus as Lord.

Recollect, also, that he was surrounded by scoffers. It is easy to swim with the current, and hard to go against the stream. This man heard the priests, in their pride, ridicule the Lord, and the great multitude of the common people, with one consent, joined in the scorning; his comrade caught the spirit of the hour, and mocked also, and perhaps he did the same for a while, but through the grace of God he was changed, and believed in the Lord Jesus in the teeth of all the scorn.

I. Carefully note that the crucified thief was

OUR LORD'S LAST COMPANION

on earth. What sorry company our Lord selected when He was here! He did not consort with the religious Pharisees or the philosophic Sadducees, but He was known as "the friend of publicans and sinners." How I rejoice at this! It gives me assurance that He will not refuse to associate with *me*. As the Great Physician, our Lord was much with the sick; He went where there was room for Him to exercise His healing art. The whole have no need of a physician; they cannot appreciate him, nor afford scope for his skill; and therefore He did not frequent their abodes. Yes, after all, our Lord did make a good choice when He saved you and me; for in us He has found abundant room for His mercy and grace.

Lest any here should be despairing, and say, "He will never deign to look on me," I want you to notice that the last companion of Christ on earth was a sinner, and

NO ORDINARY SINNER.

He had broken even the laws of man, for he was a convict, who had lain in the condemned cell, and was then undergoing execution for his crimes. A convicted felon was the person with whom our Lord last consorted upon earth. What a lover of the souls of guilty men is He! What a stoop He makes to the very lowest of mankind! To this most unworthy of men the Lord of glory, ere He quitted life, spoke with matchless grace. He spoke to him such wondrous words as never can be excelled if you search the

Scriptures through: "To-day thou shalt be with Me in paradise." I do not suppose that anywhere in this Tabernacle there will be found a man who has been convicted before the law, or who is even chargeable with a crime against common honesty; but if there should be such a person among my hearers, I would invite him to find pardon and change of heart through our Lord Jesus Christ. You may come to Him whoever you may be; for this man did.

This man was not only a sinner; he was

A SINNER NEWLY AWAKENED.

I do not suppose that he had seriously thought of the Lord Jesus before. According to the other evangelists, he appears to have joined with his fellow thief in scoffing at Jesus: if he did not actually himself use opprobrious words, he was so far consenting thereunto, that the evangelist did him no injustice when he said, "The thieves also, which were crucified with Him, cast the same in His teeth." Yet, now, on a sudden, he wakes up to the conviction that the man who is dying at his side is something more than a man. He reads the title over His head and believes it to be true—"This is Jesus the King of the Jews." Thus believing, he makes his appeal to the Messiah, whom he had so newly found, and commits himself to His hands. My hearer, do you see this truth, that the moment a man knows Jesus to be the Christ of God, he may at once put his trust in Him, and be saved?

Once more: this man whom Christ saved at last was a man who

COULD DO NO GOOD WORKS.

If salvation had been by good works, he could not have been saved; for he was fastened hand and foot to the tree of doom. It was all over with him as to act or deed of righteousness. He could say a good word or two, but that was all; he could perform no acts; and if his salvation had depended on an active life of usefulness, certainly he never could have been saved. He was a sinner also, who could not exhibit a long-enduring repentance for sin, for he had so short a time to live. He could not have experienced bitter convictions, lasting over months and years, for his time was measured by moments, and he was on the borders of the grave. His end was very near, and yet the Saviour could save him, and did save him so perfectly.

This sinner, whom I have painted to you in colors none too black was one who believed in Jesus, and confessed his faith. He did trust the Lord. Jesus was a man, and he called Him so; but he knew that He was also Lord, and he called Him so and said, "Lord, remember me." He had such confidence in Jesus that, if He would but only think of him, if He would only remember him when He came into His kingdom, that would be all that he would ask of Him. Alas! my dear hearers, the trouble about some of you is that you know all about my Lord, and yet you do not trust Him.

Thus I have tried to describe the man; and, after having done my best, I shall fail of my object unless I make you see that whatever this thief was, he is

a picture of what you are. Especially if you have been a great offender, and if you have been living long without caring for eternal things, you are like that malefactor; and yet you, even you, may do as that thief did; you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, and commit your souls into His hands, and He will save you as surely as He saved the condemned brigand. Jesus graciously says, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." This means that if *you* come and trust Him, whoever you may be, He will for no reason, and on no ground, and under no circumstances, ever cast you out. Do you catch that thought? Do you feel that it belongs to you, and that if *you* come to Him, *you* shall find eternal life? I rejoice if you so far perceive the truth.

II. In the second place, note that this man was our Lord's companion

AT THE GATE OF PARADISE.

I am not going into any speculations as to where our Lord went when He quitted the body that hung on the cross. It would seem from some Scriptures, that He descended into the lower parts of the earth, that He might fill all things. But He very rapidly traversed the regions of the dead. Remember that He died perhaps an hour or two before the thief, and during that time the eternal glory flamed through the under world, and was flashing through the gates of paradise just when the pardoned thief was entering the eternal world. Who is this that entereth the pearl-gate at the same moment as the King of glory? Who is this

favored companion of the Redeemer? Is it some honored martyr? Is it a faithful apostle? Is it a patriarch, like Abraham; or a prince, like David? It is none of these. Behold, and be amazed at sovereign grace. He that goeth in at the gate of paradise, with the King of glory, is a thief, who was saved in the article of death. He is saved in no inferior way, and received into bliss in no secondary style. Verily, there are last which shall be first!

Here I would have you notice the condescension of our Lord's choice. The comrade of the Lord of glory, for whom the cherub turns aside his sword of fire, is no great one, but a newly converted malefactor. And why? I think the Saviour took him with Him as *a specimen of what He meant to do.* He seemed to say to all the heavenly powers, "I bring a sinner with Me; he is a sample of the rest." Have you heard of

HIM WHO DREAMED

that he stood within the gate of heaven, and while there he heard sweet music from a band of venerable persons who were on their way to glory? They entered the celestial portals, and there were great rejoicing and shouts. Inquiring, "What are these?" he was told that they were the goodly fellowship of the prophets. He sighed, and said, "Alas! I am not one of those." He waited a while, and another band of shining ones drew nigh, who also entered heaven with hallelujahs, and when he inquired, "Who are these, and whence came they?" the answer was, "These are the glorious company of the apostles." Again he sighed and said, "I cannot enter with them."

Then came another body of men, white-robed and bearing palms in their hands, who marched amid great acclamation into the golden city. These he learned were the noble army of martyrs; and again he wept, and said, "I cannot enter with these." In the end he heard the voices of people, and saw

A GREATER MULTITUDE

advancing, among whom he perceived Rahab and Mary Magdalene, David and Peter, Manasseh and Saul of Tarsus, and he espied especially the thief, who died at the right hand of Jesus. These all entered in —a strange company. Then he eagerly inquired, "Who are these?" and they answered, "This is the host of sinners saved by grace." Then was he exceeding glad, and said, "I can go with these." Yet, he thought there would be no shouting at the approach of this company, and that they would enter heaven without song; instead of which, there seemed to rise a seven-fold hallelujah of praise unto the Lord of love; for there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over sinners that repent.

While we are handling this text, note well *the blessedness of the place* to which the Lord called this penitent. Jesus said, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." Paradise means a garden, a garden filled with delights. The garden of Eden is the type of heaven. We know that paradise means heaven, for the apostle speaks of such a man caught up into paradise, and anon he calls it the third heaven. The next word is better still. Note the glory of the society to which this sinner is introduced: "To-day

shalt thou be with *Me* in paradise." If the Lord said, "To-day shalt thou be *with Me*," we should not need Him to add another word; for where He is, is heaven to us. He added the word "paradise," because else none could have guessed where He was going.

The stress of the text lies in the speediness of all this. "Verily I say unto thee, *To-day* shalt thou be with Me in paradise." "To-day." Thou shalt not lie in purgatory for ages, nor sleep in limbo for so many years: but thou shalt be ready for bliss at once, and at once thou shalt enjoy it. The sinner was hard by the gates of hell, but almighty mercy lifted him up, and the Lord said, "*To-day* shalt thou be with Me in paradise."

WHAT A CHANGE FROM THE CROSS

to the crown, from the anguish of Calvary to the glory of the New Jerusalem! Please notice, also, *the majesty of the Lord's grace* in this text. The Saviour said to him, "Verily *I say* unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." Our Lord gives His own will as the reason for saving this man. "I say." He says it who claims the right thus to speak.

I have thus shown you that our Lord passed within the pearly gate in company with one to whom He had pledged Himself. Why should not you and I pass through that pearl-gate in due time, clothed in His merit, washed in His blood, resting on His power? In the early Christian church, Marcus Caius Victorinus was converted; but he had reached so great an age, and had been so gross a sinner that the pastor and church doubted him. He gave, however, clear proof

of having undergone the divine change, and then there were great acclamations, and many shouts of "Victorinus has become a Christian!" Oh, that some of you big sinners might be saved! How gladly would we rejoice!

III. Now I come to my third point: note

THE LORD'S SERMON

to us from all this. The devil wants to preach this morning a bit. Yes, Satan asks to come to the front and preach to you; but he cannot be allowed. Avaunt, thou deceiver! Yet I should not wonder if he gets at certain of you when the sermon is over, and whispers, "You see you can be saved at the very last. Put off repentance and faith; you may be forgiven on your death-bed." Sirs, you know who it is that would ruin you by this suggestion. Abhor his deceitful teaching. Do not be ungrateful because God is kind. Do not provoke the Lord because He is patient. Such conduct would be unworthy and ungrateful. Do not run an awful risk because one escaped the tremendous peril. The Lord will accept all who repent; but how do you know that you will repent? It is true that one thief was saved—but the other thief was lost; one is saved; and we may not despair. The other is lost, and

WE MAY NOT PRESUME.

This man believed that Jesus was the Christ. The next thing he did was to appropriate that Christ He said, "Lord, remember me." Jesus might have said, "What have I to do with you, and what have you to do with Me? What has a thief to do with the perfect

One?" Many of you, good people, try to get as far away as you can from the erring and fallen. They might infect your innocence! Society claims that we should not be familiar with people who have offended against its laws. We must not be seen associating with them, for it might discredit us. Infamous bosh! Can anything discredit sinners such as we are by nature and by practice? If we know ourselves before God we are degraded enough in and of ourselves. Is there anybody after all, in the world who is worse than we are when we see ourselves in the faithful glass of the Word? As soon as ever a man believes that Jesus is the Christ, let him hook himself on to Him. The moment you believe Jesus to be the Saviour, seize upon Him as your Saviour.

Next, notice the doctrine of faith in its immediate power. "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." He has no sooner believed, than Christ gives him the seal of his believing in the full assurance that he shall be with Him forever in His glory. O, dear hearts, if you believe this morning, you shall be saved this morning! God grant that you, by His rich grace, may be brought into salvation here, on the spot, and at once! The next thing is

THE NEARNESS OF ETERNAL THINGS.

Think of that a minute. Heaven and hell are not places far away. Oh that we, instead of trifling about such things, because they seem so far away, would solemnly realize them, since they are so very near! This very day, before the sun goes down, some hearer, now sitting in this place, may see, in his own spirit,

the realities of heaven or hell. It has frequently happened, in this large congregation, that some one of our audience has died ere the next Sabbath has come round; it may happen this week. Think of that, and let eternal things impress you all the more because they lie so near.

Furthermore, know that if you have believed in Jesus you are prepared for heaven. It may be that you will have to live on the earth twenty, or thirty, or forty years to glorify Christ; and, if so, be thankful for the privilege; but if you do not live another hour, your instantaneous death would not alter the fact that he that believeth in the Son of God is meet for heaven. Surely, if anything beyond faith is needed to make us fit to enter paradise, the thief would have been kept a little longer here; but no, he is, in the morning, in the state of nature, at noon he enters the state of grace, and by sunset he is in the state of glory. The question never is whether a death-bed repentance is accepted if it is sincere; the question is—is it sincere?

I conclude by again saying that this is

NOT AN EXCEPTIONAL CASE,

I began with that, and I want to finish with it, because so many demi-semi-gospellers are so terribly afraid of preaching free grace too fully. I read somewhere, and I think it is true, that some ministers preach the Gospel in the same way as donkeys eat thistles, namely, very, very cautiously. On the contrary, I will preach it boldly. I have not the slightest alarm about the matter. If any of you misuse free-grace

teaching, I cannot help it. He that will be damned can as well ruin himself by perverting the Gospel as by anything else. I cannot help what base hearts may invent; but mine is to set forth the Gospel in all its fulness of grace, and I will do it. If the thief was an exceptional case—and our Lord does not usually act in such a way—there would have been a hint given of so important a fact. A hedge would have been set about this exception to all rules. Would not the Saviour have whispered quietly to the dying man, "You are the only one I am going to treat in this way"? Whenever I have to do an exceptional favor to a person, I have to say, "Do not mention this, or I shall have so many besieging me." Moreover, the inspired penman has recorded it. If it had been an exceptional case, it would not have been written in the Word of God. Men will not publish their actions in the newspapers if they feel that the record might lead others to expect from them what they cannot give. The Saviour had this wonder of grace reported in the daily news of the Gospel, because He means to repeat the marvel every day. The bulk shall be equal to the sample, and therefore He sets the sample before you all. He is able to save to the uttermost, for He saved the dying thief. The case would not have been put there to encourage hopes which He cannot fulfil. Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, and not for our disappointing. I pray you, therefore, if any of you have not yet trusted in my Lord Jesus, come and trust in Him now. Trust Him wholly; trust Him

only; trust Him at once. Then will you sing with me—

"The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day,
And there have I, though vile as he,
Washed all my sins away."

XII.

THE DOWN GRADE.

TEXT — *"Rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her."* *Isa. 66 : 10.*

THE HIGHEST STYLE OF MOURNER.—A CALL TO JOY — I. WHO THE MOURNERS WITH ZION ARE. — NUMEROUS CAUSES FOR PRESENT DEPRESSION. — THE ABSENCE OF THE GOSPEL FROM THE PULPIT. — THE COMMON ERRORS OF THE DAY — THE LATTER-DAY PANTHEISM. — THE BECLOUDED HOLINESS OF THE CHURCH. — CHURCH-FAIR GAMBLING. — ABANDONED PRAYER-MEETINGS. — SABBATH DESECRATION. — UNCONCERNED ABOUT THE UNSAVED. — II. SOME REASONS FOR REJOICING WITH ZION. — GOD HAS NOT CHANGED. — HE WILL APPEAR. — THE CHURCH WILL BE AROUSED. — MEN RAISED UP FOR THE WORK.—III. PERSONAL EXAMINATION.

A MOURNER is always an interesting person. We pass by joyful people without a thought; but when we see the ensigns of woe we pause, and sympathize even if we dare not inquire. The new-made widow, the fatherless child, the bereaved husband, these have a history in which our common humanity is interested. "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin;" and when the nature touched comes from the hand of sorrow, kinship is quick to show itself.

The highest style of mourner is one whose griefs are neither selfish nor grovelling. He who bears spiritual sorrow on account of others is of a nobler order than the man who laments his personal woes. This man has not only bowed his shoulder to the inevitable load of personal trouble, but he is obeying the command, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." The most excellent

style of mourner is the mourner *in* Zion, the mourner *for* Zion, the mourner *with* Zion. If you love the Church of God, you will share her joys; but when she passes through the dark defiles of persecution, or the rushing waters of discord, you will mourn with her. Whenever the ways of God languish, and we languish also, it is a mark that grace is in active exercise. Those who have learned this heavenly mourning are called to rejoice: "Rejoice with her, all ye that mourn for her."

I. Who are those that mourn with Jerusalem? Those that love the Church of God, and desire her prosperity; and when they do not see that prosperity, they are depressed in spirit. At this present time the

CAUSES FOR DEPRESSION

are exceedingly numerous. Nothing can make the heart of the people of God more heavy than to think that the Gospel glory of the Church is declining. There was a time when the Gospel of the free grace of God sounded forth from our pulpits as from a trumpet; but that time is past.

In former times good men differed, as they always will, as to the form of their doctrinal system; but with regard to fundamental points, they were at one; it is not so now. The Deity of our Lord and His great atoning sacrifice, His resurrection, and His judgment of the wicked, never were moot points in the Church; but they are questioned at this time. The work of the Holy Spirit may be honored in words; but what faith can be placed in those to whom He is not a person, but a mere influence? God Himself is by

some made into an impersonal being, or the soul of all things, which is much the same as nothing. *Pantheism is*

ATHEISM IN A MASK.

The plenary inspiration of Holy Scripture, as we have understood it from our childhood, is assailed in a thousand insidious ways. The fall of Adam is treated as a fable; and original sin and imputed righteousness are both denounced. As for the doctrines of grace, they are ridiculed as altogether out of vogue.

For many a year, by the grand old truths of the Gospel, sinners were converted, and saints were edified, and the world was made to know that there is a God in Israel; but these are too antiquated for the present cultured race of superior beings. They are going to regenerate the world by democratic socialism, and set up a kingdom for Christ without the new birth or the pardon of sin. In fact, men are not now to be saved by faith, but by doubt. Those who love the Church of God feel heavy at heart, because the teachers of the people cause them to err. Even from a national point of view, men of foresight see cause for grave concern. Cowper sang, in his day, words worthy to be remembered now:—

"When nations are to perish in their sins,
'Tis in the church the leprosy begins;
The priest, whose office is, with zeal sincere,
To watch the fountain, and preserve it clear,
Carelessly nods and sleeps upon the brink,
While others poison what the flock must drink.
His unsuspecting sheep believe it pure,
And, tainted by the very means of cure,

Catch from each other a contagious spot,
The foul forerunner of a general rot.
Then Truth is hushed, that Heresy may preach,
And all is trash that Reason cannot reach."

The old motto of the city of Glasgow was, "Let Glasgow flourish *by the preaching of the Word*." Our country has flourished by the preaching of the Word; and, under God, she has been raised to eminence, because of her Protestant Christianity; and when she departs from this, the reason for maintaining her greatness will have ceased. This makes us mourn.

Another cause of mourning is when we see the holiness of the visible Church beclouded. I trust I am not given to finding fault where fault there is not; but I cannot open my eyes without seeing things done in our churches which thirty years ago were not so much as dreamed of. In the matter of amusements, professors have gone far in

THE WAY OF LAXITY.

What is worse, the churches have now conceived the idea that it is their duty to amuse the people. Christians who used to protest against going to the theatre, now cause the theatre to come to them. Ought not many school-rooms to be licensed for stage-plays? If some one were to see to the rigid carrying out of the law, would they not be required to take out a license for theatricals? I dare not touch upon what has been done at bazaars and fancy fairs. Think of those who enjoy communion with God playing the fool in costume! They talk of wrestling with the Lord in secret prayer, but they juggle with the world in

unconcealed gambling. Can this be right? Have right and wrong shifted places? Ah, sirs! there may have been a time when Christians were too precise, but is has not been in my day. There may have been such a dreadful thing as Puritanic rigidity, but I have never seen it. We are quite free from that evil now, if it ever existed. We have gone from liberty to libertinism. We have passed beyond the dubious into the dangerous, and none can prophesy where we shall stop.

Moreover, we see in the Church that her sacred ardor is cooling. There is still fervor in certain believers, and fervor of the best kind, for the divine Spirit has not utterly departed from us. We have around us Christian men and women who will do and dare anything for Jesus, and bear witness for Him in the open street. Thank God for such! They are a standing protest against

A LUKEWARM AGE.

And we have still our gracious young men who will give heir lives to bear the name of Christ among the heathen, amid the fevers of the Congo River. Still, things are not in Israel as we could desire. Very seldom are believers nowadays charged with being fanatical, nor even with being too enthusiastic; and this is a sign that we are below the right heat. There is cause to grieve over many churches and individuals, that they are neither cold nor hot. Let us be personal and practical and see whether we have not cause to grieve over ourselves in that respect.

There is grave cause for mourning in Zion, because the services of God's house are neglected. In certain large places of worship which once were crowded to the door, I hear that there are more pews than people. Where the Gospel is gone from the pulpit, listeners soon go from the pews. "I do not know where to send my converts with the hope that they will hear the Gospel," said a soul-winner to me, the other day, concerning a certain London district. I cannot conceal from myself the gloomy fact that the habit of going to a place of worship is being altogether lost in this city. There are streets upon streets where only one or two persons are in the habit of attending the house of God. Alas! time was when it was thought to be a duty to observe the Sabbath; but it is now a day for lying late in bed, loafing about in shirt-sleeves, or mending rabbit-hutches and pigeon-houses! Do not think that I am exaggerating. I am speaking in sober seriousness the sad truth, which has been reported to me by city missionaries, district visitors, and workingmen who live among it. This is lamentable. How has it come about? I fear that it is very much the case, because if the people did go to many places of worship they could not understand what they would hear; and, what is worse, if they did understand it, it would not be of much use to them. The

CRITICISMS OF MODERN THOUGHT

are of no value to the workingman. If the old Gospel is brought to the front in all its simplicity, and preached with fervor, we may hope to see the people

back again to hear it; but the task of calling them back is not an easy one. Coincident with the prevalence of a questioning theology comes this religious indifference. Under the prevailing form of doctrine, our city is *becoming more heathenish than Christian.* Between the childishness of superstitious sacramentarianism and the wilful wickedness of doubt, the masses are sliding into an utter disregard of holy things. Reverence is dying out; and as surely as it dies *we shall see a fierce attempt at anarchy.*

The evil over which I now mourn is not only prevalent among the outlying masses, but it taints Christians themselves. Look at your half-Sunday professors, content with only one service and weary of that! How is it with many Christian people, as to meetings for prayer? Prayer-meetings are the very soul of Church work, and they bring down the blessing upon all our spiritual agencies; yet they are despised by our high-fliers. This is not only bad in itself, but it is a sign of something worse. Men who can pray to edification are in some directions becoming rare. One pastor told me, the other day, that out of a considerable congregation he found it hard to make up a prayer-meeting at all, because he had so

FEW PRAYING MEN.

It is a dreadful impeachment against the churches, but faithfulness compels me to state it, before things grow still worse. You can get a crowd to a concert, but hardly a dozen to prayer! If there had been a magic-lantern, or a penny reading, or a recitation with comic songs, the pious people would

have strained a point to be there; but to pray is much too dull for novel-reading, theatre-haunting professors.

Another very great and grave cause for mourning to all true Christians, is the multitude of sinners that remain unsaved. We do not dispute the fact, neither do we feel its sadness. Look at the many round about us who are living in open evil, going after their lusts, plunging deeper and deeper into what must be their destruction. Look at the many that are blind, though they have eyes; that hear not, though they have ears; that feel not, though they are rational beings! How can we bear it? How can we bear it, that there should be any among us who know not God, who love not the Lord Jesus Christ, who are yet in their sins? An unsaved soul is a sight that might well transform us into Niobes, and cause us to weep perpetual showers of pitying grief, until the arm of mercy should interpose to work salvation.

The darkest thought for a true heart is that, while souls are lost even now, the evil does not end here; but they are passing away into that hopeless state in the next world which our Lord speaks of as the place of the worm which dieth not, and the fire which is not quenched. They are going from this place, where mercy is proclaimed, to that dread tribunal where the voice of judgment cries, "Depart, ye cursed." They are hastening away to appear before the great white throne, unsaved, unrenewed, unforgiven! He who can see a soul lost, and yet is not distressed how

dwelleth the love of God in him? We ought to be filled with sorrow when men perish wilfully under the Gospel.

REASONS FOR JOY.

II. I have, at least, shown you that we are not without overflowing fountains of grief: but I say, in the second place, that we may yet rejoice with Jerusalem. Why may we do so amid such reasons for mourning?

We may rejoice with the chosen of the Lord when we remember, first of all, that God has not changed, either in nature, or in love to His people, or in the purpose of His grace. When His Church was faithful, His divine decree was carried out; and if His Church be unfaithful, He is still omnipotent, and can, therefore, work out His great designs. He has not changed His system of working. He intends still to bless the world through the Church: He means to use His saved ones for the saving of others.

A further joy is this—we may expect the Lord to appear. In the Middle Ages the darkness deepened into seven-fold night; but, as in a moment, God said, "Let there be light," and Luther, and Calvin, and Zwingli, and other stars shone forth in the midnight sky, and made the gloom to disappear right speedily. Our glorious God can do so at this present crisis. Oh for a word from the throne! The battle is not ours, but the Lord's. God knows no difficulty. Omnipotence has servants everywhere, and power to create as many more agents of its purpose as there are sands on the sea-shore. Sitting in the chimney-

side, to-night, a young Luther is preparing, as he looks in the fire, to burn the bulls of the philosophic hierarchy.

When the Lord shall put on strength, then shall His Church be aroused. I hope to see

A REVIVED CHURCH

holding truthful doctrine, agonizing over lost souls, and blessed with hosts of converts. Glory be to the name of the Lord! where all is as a desert He can make a garden. Once more He will shake, not only earth, but also heaven. Wherefore let us rest in the Lord, and sing with joyful confidence, since no good thing will He withhold from His Church, and no evil thing will He long permit to do her damage.

Oh that the days of refreshing were come! Then shall the Church have many converts, proving her power, and increasing her influence. Thousands shall turn to Jesus at the expected Pentecost. Then shall she nourish them well, and feed them with knowledge and understanding. I fear that if, in certain churches, there were to be many converts, they would not know what to do with them; but when the Holy Spirit comes into their midst, then the Church shall be a nursing mother. I pray that it may be so among us. We have added to us, during the last two months, first seventy, and then ninety, fresh members, for which I thank God. It is a little church in itself; but unless you all look after them, and try to help them on, we shall be embarrassed by such large additions to our number. Oh that this church may carefully see to all the children that the Lord gives her; and if so,

we shall indeed have the fullest reason for rejoicing with her!

Nor is this all: God will raise up men fitted to do His work. Read the twenty-first verse: "I will also take of them for priests, and for Levites, saith the Lord." When the Holy Spirit visits a church, He is sure to bestow special gifts, and give special calls As the Holy Ghost said, "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them," so will He say in our churches, to our great delight. When God sent

PASTOR HARMS

to Hermansberg, it was a mere heath, and there were few on that heath that knew the Lord: but under his zealous preaching the whole village was turned into a missionary society. Oh that we could do anything like it! Farmers and laborers, men and women, became missionaries for Christ to Africa; and a large proportion of the population went abroad, either to preach the Gospel, or to form little colonies to work with the missionary and support him. The sold house and land and everything, and thus made Hermansberg the starting-place of a great evangelizing enterprise. My beloved people, I hardly dare be so ambitious as to hope that you will ever reach such consecration! See how it was among the Moravians; every man becoming a member of their church becomes himself a teacher of the Word: every man, woman, and child among them sought to bring souls to Christ. Would God that the power of the Lord would come in that way upon all our Churches! And we may expect it,

if it be the true Gospel which we preach, if it be the Gospel which we love, if it be in the power of the Gospel that we live.

THE PERSONAL QUESTION.

III. But now my time has nearly gone, and so I must finish by asking, Why should we personally be of the number that mourn with the Church, and that rejoice with her? Perhaps some of you do not belong to that honorable company. I pray the Holy Spirit to make you of that host at once.

For, first, there is our own sin and ruin to mourn over. I spoke, just now, of *how* we ought to feel for a lost soul; but how ought that lost soul to feel for itself? Poor soul, if we ought to mourn for you, how much more should you mourn for yourself! If you should be lost, if I have been faithful to you, I shall be no loser. What if you go down to hell, your mother's pleadings being in vain? Your mother will not be robbed of her glory because you refuse the Saviour. It is your soul, your own soul, your only soul, that is in jeopardy. The Lord have mercy upon you! The Lord make you at once a mourner in the Church of God, that you may, ere long, rejoice in her Saviour!

Next, I may be speaking to some one who has been a backslider, and is a backslider even now. By your wretched wandering you have disgraced the name of Christ, and you have dishonored the cause which you professed to love. You have made the enemy blaspheme, and you cannot wonder that your rest is broken. If anybody ought to be a mourner, you should be. You should take front rank among those

who lament for the Church of Christ, seeing that you have done her so much damage that you will never be able to undo it even by a long life of usefulness.

Brethren, do you not think that we

MIGHT ALL BECOME MOURNERS

when we think *of our own want of zeal*, and want of care for the souls of others? The preacher would smite upon his breast; and he invites you to do the same. Who among us spends half the thought that he should spend upon the conversion of his fellow men? We all think of them a little; I hope the most of you are doing something for Jesus and His cause.

May we not add to this our own failures in the matter of holiness? It is easy enough to drag the whole Church up, as I did just now, and scourge her as she well deserves; but it is not so easy for each guilty person to flagellate himself. Yet this is what is needed. Ask—Have I been as holy as I should be? Has my house been ordered aright? Is there family prayer observed, not as a matter of form, but in life and power? Am I towards my children, towards my husband, towards my wife, towards my servants, as I ought to be? Are we as upright and generous as we should be in our business, and in our connection with common daily life? O sirs, we may each of us become mourners with the Church of God if we examine ourselves with care!

Let me add that we have all a great concern in this matter, and we ought, therefore, to join with the Church in all her griefs. If the ministry of our pastors be not successful, we shall lose by its want of power.

None of us will be able to escape scot-free from the terrible damage which evil is working all around. When false doctrine breaks forth like the water-floods, it will surge around all our houses. Let us, therefore, cry mightily unto God, not for ourselves only, but for the one great universal Church, and for this great city, and for this wicked world. O Lord our God, arise for Thy cause and crown! Take hold on sword and buckler, and plead Thine own case, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

XIII.

TAKING POSSESSION.

TEXT—"*Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.*" *Josh. 1:2, 3.*

UNSATISFACTORY WANDERINGS. — NEAR THE INHERITANCE BUT NOT IN IT. — I. A SURVEY OF THE INHERITANCE. — EXCEEDING BROAD. — THE LIMITATION SELF-IMPOSED. — THE POSSESSIONS ATTAINABLE. — ASSURANCE. — SONSHIP. — HOLINESS COMMUNION. — A DESIRABLE LAND. — FULL OF VARIETY. — II. THE TITLE DEEDS. — A VALID COVENANT. — GRACIOUS. — RIGHTEOUS. — SURE — III. A MOVE TOWARD POSSESSION. — GOING OVER JORDAN. — HOW POSSESSION IS TAKEN. — THE BARGAIN OF PENN AND THE INDIANS. — HOW SIN IS DRIVEN OUT. — REASONS WHY POSSESSION IS NOT TAKEN. — A HUNGRY MAN AT A FREE MEAL.

UNDER the leadership of Moses the children of Israel had been journeying toward the land of promise. Owing to their waywardness, what might have been done in less than a month occupied many years. They wandered up and down in the wilderness, sometimes close on the border of their inheritance, and anon lost in the great desert. Alas! many of God's people are still in this unsatisfactory condition: they have come out of Egypt, the depths have swallowed up their adversaries, and they are on the way to the promised heritage: but they have not yet entered into rest. They will, we trust, ultimately reach the peace of God which passeth all understanding, for they have

faith sufficient to prove them to be God's people, and, therefore, the Lord will surely bring them in; but, assuredly they make a great deal of marching for very small progress. For lack of faith they go about, when with a step they might possess

THE PROMISED CANAAN.

Our friends have come as far as the first verse of our Lord's invitation, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" and they have a measure of that rest which comes of pardoned sin and confidence in Jesus. The pity is that they have not advanced to His next word of exhortation, "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." This is a rest discovered and enjoyed through willing service: "Ye shall find rest unto your souls." Many people are saved in one sense, but in another sense they are seeking salvation. Oh that we may come to be saved in every sense! may salvation be ours in the broadest, widest, deepest, highest meaning of that blessed word! May we not only be saved *from*, but saved *to!* Saved *from* sin, that makes us safe. Saved *to* holiness, that makes us happy. May we realize our completeness in Christ this day, and cease from the wanderings of fear! It is time that we took possession of that goodly heritage which the Lord has made our own, for in Christ Jesus "we have obtained an inheritance."

I. First, let us take

A SURVEY OF THE INHERITANCE.

I would say of the inheritance which God has prepared for His saints, and has given to them, that it is

exceeding broad. We read here in this Book of Joshua, "From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast." These people did not conquer all the country, but were content with the narrow bounds of Canaan. They began their enterprise bravely, but soon showed a contracted spirit. Moses, in the thirty-fourth of Numbers, which is well worthy of a careful reading, gave them a little map, or ordnance survey, of the inner country, which they were commanded to conquer, and out of which they were to drive the inhabitants with the sword.

The various races of Canaanites had brought upon themselves the curse of a righteous God. Their existence upon the face of God's earth had become a calamity to mankind by reason of their horrible vices. They were doomed to utter extinction by the justice of God, as other races have been whose story profane history records. The Israelites were appointed to be their executioners. They did not accomplish their task; after a little while they began to make treaties and marriages with the doomed people, and they became thorns in their sides. Outside of these Canaanitish nations were greater territories, which stretched right away from the Lebanon range down to the border of Egypt as far east as the great river Euphrates, from whose banks their fathers came. This large domain was never altogether conquered by Israel, although David possessed a large portion of it, and Solomon still more. The people of these wide

regions were not so far gone in evil as the degraded tribes of Canaan; and so they were to be spared, if they submitted to the sway of Israel. Even the inner kingdom Israel did not wholly subdue, and the wider region it left for centuries untouched.

Beloved, this is a sadly correct picture of what happens to numbers of God's people nowadays. The inheritance that God has given us to enjoy in Christ Jesus is exceeding broad; but

WE LIMIT OURSELVES.

All that we can think or desire is ours in the covenant of grace. There are immeasurable breadths and lengths, but we confine ourselves to close quarters. Truly, "there is very much land yet to be possessed!" Some graces you must have, or you are not saved; some sins must at once be driven out of your life at the sword's point, or you are not the Lord's. As for the choicer graces, you are foolish indeed if you think of doing without them; and as for the less violent sins, you err greatly if you spare one of them. The deep knowledge, the spiritual experience, the high joy, the extreme delight, and the heavenly communion, which fall to the lot of certain of the saints, should be enjoyed by us all. There is no reason why one should miss them; for if they have but faith enough to grasp all that God gives, they have full permission to do so.

Just let me show what I mean. When we at first come to Christ by faith,

WE BEGIN TO ENTER

into our inheritance, for we obtain the pardon of sin.

Some believers are not even sure that they have a present and perfect remission; but some of us know that we are, once for all, "washed in the blood of the Lamb," and therefore we are whiter than snow. This we know; but beyond that lies "acceptance in the Beloved," which possibly we have not dared to claim. Hosts of professors are satisfied to be washed, but have not yet asked to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ.

Think of another great blessing, namely, that of sonship. But sonship is not all—"If children, then heirs, heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ." Adoption you must have, heirship you ought to have. How rich you are, since God Himself is yours—"heirs of God"! Yes, God Himself is as truly yours as He is Christ's—"joint-heirs with Jesus Christ." Why are we naked and poor and miserable, when we are heirs of a kingdom by reason of our adoption of the Lord? Let us take the good the Lord provides us.

Consider now the matter of regeneration. When we come to Christ by faith, we are born again, and made new creatures in Christ Jesus; this must be. But, brethren, when we are born again we perceive that the new birth begets

A NEW LIFE,

and that new life develops itself in the beauty of holiness. Holiness is the fruit of regeneration; yet some imagine that they cannot be holy, at least not to any great extent. They believe that they can be saved from certain grosser evils, but they cannot ascend to those glorious heights of consecration and

sanctification without which the believer can never attain to the stature of a man in Christ Jesus. My message to you is, "Arise, go over this Jordan, and take possession of the larger inheritance. Aspire to the utmost God can give.

Again, as soon as a man has believed in Jesus he is safe. If thou believest that Jesus is the Christ, thou art born of God; and, being born of God, thou comest

UNDER THE DIVINE WING,

and the Lord shall preserve thee from evil. Many are satisfied that this is true, but they do not, therefore, enter into peace as they should. That undisturbed serenity which springs from a sense of perfect safety in Christ Jesus is a glorious domain into which they do not enter. This must not go on. We must have faith; but we may have, and we ought to have, the full assurance of faith.

Once more: when we come to Christ by faith we have communion with God; and this is a land that floweth with milk and honey. Out of communion comes usefulness, and there are certain who fancy that they can never be very useful. The Lord cannot do many mighty works through them, because of their unbelief. They have to be fed with a spoon, like invalid children. If they had but faith enough to receive power from on high by fuller communion with God, they might become as David. There is no limit to the possibilities of usefulness in any man or woman when perfectly consecrated.

Next, it is exceedingly desirable. The country into

which Israel entered was of a choice kind. Travellers in Palestine tell us that it is

THE WORLD CONDENSED.

Within that narrow strip of territory you get plains and hills, frosts of Winter and heats of Summer, with products both of the semi-tropical and temperate zones. Palestine is the whole earth in miniature, and all the advantages of all lands are gathered into it. It was, in Joshua's days, a place of extreme fertility: "a land that floweth with milk and honey." Nor was this all; while it was fertile on the surface it was rich underneath. The useful metals were near at hand, and every other convenience. All things were waiting for the true heirs of the land. Beloved, when faith gets her heritage in Christ, she is brought into a wealthy place. When sin is driven out, and we come to live in God's own land, then we find precious treasure; we dig, and we are enriched. Why do we not take possession of that He has prepared for us?

This heritage upon which we are now looking down from the summit of our faith is full of variety. In Palestine there were fertile plains and rich valleys between rising hills and towering mountains. It was a land of brooks and rivers, a land which the Lord God thought upon. It was, in those days, the joy of all the earth; it was as the garden of the Lord for exceeding excellency. Beloved, if you come to Christ, you shall never need to go away from Him to find variety of joys. In His teaching you shall find Lebanons of sublime doctrine, and Sharons of pleasant precept. Here are Hermons of experience,

Tabors of communion, Jabboks of prevailing prayer, and Cheriths of Divine Providence. The revelation of God is a blessed country, full of all manner of delights. All that is in Christ is meant for all believers, and, therefore, all believers may have all that is in Christ, who is all in all. We should not be content with pence when He endows us with pounds.

II. I beg you, in the next place, to glance at

THE TITLE DEEDS

of our inheritance. We shall not require a lawyer to assist us in our examination; but if there should be here a legal critic who would like to overhaul our papers, he is welcome to do so. I would not mind exhibiting our title before the bench of judges, for it has no flaw in it, and will stand in the highest court—yea, even in the last judgment. I have pleaded this incomparable title in several courts already, and it has been found to convey to me a valid gift. Here is the title deed, "The land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel." It is repeated further on, "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you." This is an abstract of our title.

First, notice its covenant character: "I have given it to you." The Lord had given it to them from of old when He promised it to their father Abraham. Thus they came into possession by an ancient deed of gift which entailed it upon them from generation to generation. I am glad that our tenure of the kingdom of grace is ancient and well established, and that it is not so much with us, directly, as with One infinitely

greater, with whom it stands fast forever. Observe, next, that

THIS DEED OF GIFT

is notable for its graciousness. How does it run? Which I do *sell* to them? Ah, no! It is no sale, but a free gift. Does it say, "Which I do *offer* to them if they will earn it"? No, no! it is a present, unconditional grant of sovereign love. Nothing is freer than a gift: "The gift of God is eternal life." He has given us all things for nothing, that we might behold the exceeding riches of His grace.

Note well the righteousness of our title—"Which *I* do give them." The Lord God has a right to give what He pleases, for "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." Of His own has He given unto us. Do not fail to see its sureness. He not only says, "I have given it," and in some other places, "I will give it," but He declares, "I do give it." God gives Christ and His grace to us every day. The highest privileges of the covenant of grace are not the monopoly of advanced saints, but they are the common property of all believers. Well, then, being yourselves favored and chosen, why do you not take hold upon the glorious estate which belongs to the chosen family? Come, brethren, bestir yourselves and claim your heirship. Take possession of the whole territory of grace which the Lord has dedicated to your use.

III. Now I have brought you to the third point—let us make

A MOVE TOWARD OUR POSSESSIONS.

There is your land, but Jordan rolls between. The first thing to do in this matter is to go over this Jordan. What do we mean? Out in the wilderness, as a seeker whose faith does not enter in, you are like a sheep which wanders from the fold, and you find little rest. You are apt to be numbered with the Bedouin of the desert, and not with the people of the Lord. Come out from the world, and be separate. The land of gracious experience is meant for you to dwell in, so that you may be recognized as the Lord's peculiar people, separated unto the Most High. Are you ready to come right out, to be settled in Immanuel's land, to break every link with "the world which lieth in wickedness"? It is required of you, in order to your full entrance into the grace state, that you take up a decided stand on the Lord's side. On the other side of Jordan is your portion, and not in the wilderness of Sin.

Having decided for the Lord, you are next to take possession by an act of simple faith. The Lord says to you, "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you." This is an easy way of taking land: to put your foot down upon it. You will remember that the red Indians agreed to sell to William Penn as much land as a man could walk round in a day; and I do not wonder that at the end of the day they complained that the white brother had made a big walk. I think I should have put my best leg foremost if whatever I could put my foot upon would be mine; would not you? Why, then, do you not hurry up in spiritual matters? Many of the Lord's

poor and unlearned ones obtain more from the promise than the more cultured ever do. The learned man lifts his head up, but the simple put their foot down; and this last is the way to the inheritance. By criticism *you may put your foot in it*, but by faith you

PUT YOUR FOOT ON IT.

Strangers cavil, children claim. He that can trust his Lord may say, "In the name of the living God this blessing is mine." Come, then, brother, if there be more holiness, put your foot on it; if there be more happiness, put your foot on it; if there be more usefulness, put your foot on it. Lay your claim to all that is put within your reach in Scripture; this is the victory that overcometh the world, and conquereth Canaan, even our faith.

But the Canaanite was there! Yes, I know it; but you see he had no right there; the Lord had outlawed him. The land was Israel's by the Lord's gift, and they had a right to fight for the possession of their own estates. God's people are in conflict with sin, and they carry out this war vigorously when they have first seen their right to the blessings of grace, as given them of the living God. In spiritual things,

WAIVE NO SPIRITUAL RIGHT.

Say to sin, that now mars your peace, "Peace is mine; clear out!" Say to sin, that stops your usefulness, "That usefulness is mine. I claim it: clear out!" Hivite, Jebusite, Girgashite, whatever sort of fellow you are, clear out of my heart and life, for holiness is mine! God, the sovereign possessor of all things,

has given us our redeemed nature, to have and to hold for His glory, and we mean to have it!

I long to encourage you, my friends, to carry on this sacred crusade. I would have you grasp all which the hand of love holds out to you. Need I urge you? If there be such need, you are in a sorry way. I do not believe that if I should read from this pulpit that my friend John Smith over there had been left five thousand acres of land, I should require to follow him home to persuade him to go and look at it. If my sister yonder received a notification that a very nice little estate had been left her in the country, I do not believe I need beg her to look after it. She would take an early train to-morrow morning to go and look over her farm. Brethren, here is an inheritance so broad and wide and lasting; why do you not hasten to take it? There is holiness, do you not want it? There is serenity, do you not desire it? There is joy unspeakable and full of glory, do you not wish for it? There is usefulness, do you not hunger for it? This is the reason

WHY SOME ARE INDIFFERENT.

They are *ignorant;* they do not even know that these choice blessings are to be had. But all that any child of God was you may be; all the joy and bliss and holiness ever enjoyed upon earth, you may enjoy. The land is before you; go in to possess it. Many do not possess the land because of *unbelief.* You are empty, but Jesus fills you. You are in prison, but Jesus sets you at liberty. Why not rejoice in that liberty? The Lord deliver us from unbelief, for it is

enough to shut any man out of the inheritance. Many are *indolent.* Oh the laziness of some of God's people! I will not enlarge upon this matter, probably you know something about it yourselves. Lastly, the *indecision* of a great many is another cause why they do not possess the land. There is a hesitancy to go up and seize it. They mean to be better Christians before they die. I wonder how many Christians here would like to finish their lives to-day! Set your house in order at once, my brother. Give away a full portion of your substance immediately. Begin to work for Jesus at once. Why should you hesitate? You blame the sinner when he delays; surely the saint is to be blamed, too, when he also lingers.

A FREE MEAL.

I have done when I have said to any soul here that is seeking the Lord, if you to-day come in, and accept the blessings of the covenant, you may have them and welcome. Do not say to yourself, "It will be a presumptuous thing for me to believe in Jesus." It will be a kind of presumption which has no sin in it. If a rich man in one of the famine-stricken districts of China were to say to his servant, "Provide a great feast, and set it out in the street," and he were then to put up a notice to hungry Chinamen, "Whosoever will, may come," I do not think that, if I were a hungry Chinaman, I should stop away from the dinner from fear of presumption. I should fall to, and ask no questions, for my stomach's sake, if for nothing else. O poor, doubting sinner, you had better do the same.

Feed freely, and fear not. Come, let us sing together that little ditty:

"I do believe, I will believe,
That Jesus died for me;
And on the cross He shed His blood
From sin to set me free."

This will be a blessed morning for you, if you can not only sing it, but carry it out at once, by a simple faith in our living, risen, reigning Saviour. God bless you for Christ's sake!

XIV.

PROFESSION WITHOUT POWER.

TEXT—"*Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*" *2 Timothy 3:5.*

THE WORLD TO GROW WORSE, NOT BETTER.—THE SECOND ADVENT THE ONLY HOPE FOR THE CHURCH.—SURELY TO COME BEFORE THE MILLENNIUM.—INTERLOPERS TO BE FOUND IN THE CHURCH.—I. THE MEN.—WHAT THEY HAD.—A FORM OF GODLINESS.—ATTENTION TO THE ORDINANCES.—ATTENDANCE AT CHURCH.—GODLY CONVERSATION.—RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY.—THE FORM SOMETIMES HEREDITARY.—THE RESULT OF COURTSHIP.—OF NATURAL DISPOSITION.—OF DESIRE FOR RESPECT.—OR GAIN.—WHAT THEY DID NOT HAVE.—THE POWER.—II. THE FOLLY OF IT.—DEGRADES THE NAME OF CHRIST.—NO VALUE IN IT.—NO COMFORT.—HAS NO CONSTANCY. A SHAMEFUL THING.

PAUL warns us of certain characters which will appear in the last times. It is a very terrible list. The like have appeared in other days, but we are led by his warning to apprehend that they will appear in greater numbers in the last days than in any previous age. We are nearing that period at this very time. That these people would, some of them, be within the Church is the most painful part of it; but they will be so, for they are comprehended in this last clause of the black catalogue, which we have taken for our text —"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."

NO MILLENNIUM TILL JESUS COMES.

Paul does not paint the future with rose-color; he is no smooth-tongued prophet of a golden age, into

which this dull earth may be imagined to be glowing. There are sanguine brethren who are looking forward to everything growing better and better and better, until, at last, this present age ripens into a millennium. They will not be able to sustain their hopes, for Scripture gives them no solid basis to rest upon. We who believe that there will be no millennial reign without the King, and who expect no rule of righteousness except from the appearing of the rigthteous Lord, are nearer the mark. Apart from the second Advent of our Lord, the world is more likely to sink into a pandemonium than to rise into a millennium. A divine interposition seems to me the hope set before us in Scripture, and, indeed, to be the only hope adequate to the occasion.

With this cloud upon our spirit, we come to the text itself. Let us consider it carefully, and may the Holy Spirit help us! True religion is a spiritual thing, but it necessarily embodies itself in a form. Man is a spiritual creature, but the human spirit needs a body in which to enshrine itself; and thus, by this need, we become allied to materialism; and if not

"HALF DUST, HALF DEITY,"

as one has said, we are certainly both matter and soul. In each of us there is the form or body, and the soul or power. It is so with religion: it is essentially a spiritual thing, but it requires a form in which to embody and manifest itself. If you get both the form, as modelled in the Word of God, and the power, as bestowed by the Spirit of God, you do well, and are living Christians. If you get the power alone,

without the ordained form, you somewhat maim yourself; but if you get the form without the power, then you dwell in spiritual death. The raw material of a devil is an angel bereft of holiness. You cannot make a Judas except out of an apostle. The eminently good in outward form, when without inward life, decays into the foulest thing under heaven.

I. First, let us talk awhile of

THE MEN.

They had the form of godliness, but denied the power thereof. Note *what they had*, and then observe *what they had not.* They had a form of godliness. What is the form of godliness? It is, first of all, attention to the ordinances of religion. These, so far as they are Scriptural, are few and simple. There is baptism, wherein, in figure, the believer is buried with Christ, that he may rise into newness of life; and there is the Lord's Supper, wherein, in type and emblem, he feeds upon Christ, and sustains the life which came to him by fellowship with Christ's death. Those who have obeyed the Lord in these two ordinances have exhibited in their own persons the form of godliness.

The form of godliness involves attendance with the assemblies of God's people. Those who have professed Christ are accustomed to come together at certain times for worship, and, in their assemblies, they join in common prayer and common praise. They listen to the testimony of God by His servants whom He calls to preach His Word with power. They also associate together in church fellowship for purposes of mutual help and discipline. This is a very proper

form, full of blessing both to the church and to the world, when it does not die down into mere form.

Some go further than worship, for they use

A GREAT DEAL OF RELIGIOUS TALK.

They freely speak of the things of God in Christian company. They can defend the doctrines of Scripture, they can plead for its precepts, and they can narrate the experience of a believer. They are fondest of talking of what is doing in the church: the tattle of the streets of Jerusalem is very pleasant to them. They flavor their speech with godly phrases when they are in company that will relish it. I do not censure them; on the contrary, I wish there were more of holy talk among professors. But there may be a savor of religion about a man's conversation, and yet it may be a borrowed flavor, *like hot sauces* used to disguise the staleness of ancient meat.

More than this, some have a form of godliness upheld and published by religious activity. It is possible to be intensely active in the outside work of the church, and yet to know nothing of spiritual power. One may be an excellent Sunday-school teacher after a fashion, and yet have need to be taught what it is to be born again. One may be an eloquent preacher, or a diligent officer in the Church of God, and yet know nothing of the mysterious power of the Spirit of truth upon the heart. Brethren, I speak to myself and to each one of you in solemn earnestness, if much speaking, generous giving, and constant occupation could win heaven, we might easily make sure of it, but more is needful.

WHY THEY HOLD IT.

I need not enlarge further. You all know what a form of godliness is, and most of us who are here present hold fast that form; may we never dishonor it! But now, as these people had not the power of godliness, how did they come to hold the form of it? Some come by the form of godliness in an hereditary way. Their ancestors were always godly people, and they almost naturally take up with the profession of their fathers. This is common, and where it is honest, it is most commendable. Yet the idea of birthright membership is an evil one, and is as perilous as it is unscriptural.

So have I seen the form of godliness taken up on account of friendships. Many a time

COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE

have led to a formal religiousness, lacking heart. The future husband is induced to make a profession of religion for the sake of gaining one who was a sincere Christian, and would not have broken her Lord's command to be unequally yoked together with an unbeliever. Godliness should never be put on in order that we may put a wedding ring upon the finger; this is a sad abuse of religious profession. Other kinds of friendship, also, have led men and women to profess a faith they never had, and to unite themselves visibly with the church, while they were never truly a part of it.

Certain persons assume the form of godliness from a natural religious disposition. Do not suppose that all unconverted people are without religion. Much

religiousness is found in the heathen, and there are races which have naturally more of reverence than others. The German, with his profound philosophy, is often free, not only from superstition, but from reverence, while the Russian is by race naturally religious, not to say superstitious. We perceive like differences among our own acquaintances; one man is readily fooled by sceptics, while another is ready, with open mouth, to believe every word. One is naturally an infidel, another is as naturally credulous. I mean, then, that to some the form of godliness commends itself, because they have a leaning that way.

I do not doubt that in these silken days many have a form of godliness because of

THE RESPECT IT BRINGS

them. Time was, when to be a Christian was to be reviled, if not to be imprisoned, and perhaps burned at the stake. Hypocrites were fewer in those days, for a profession cost too much; yet, strange to say, there were some who played the Judas even in those times. To-day religion walks forth in her velvet slippers; and in certain classes and ranks, if men did not make some profession of religion they would be looked upon with suspicion, and therefore men will take the name of Christian upon them, and wear religion as a part of dress.

Godliness is the result of a great change of heart in reference to God and His character. Godliness looks toward God, and mourns its distance from Him: godliness hastens to draw nigh, and rests not till it is at home with God. Godliness makes a man like God.

Godliness leads a man to love God, and to serve God; it brings the fear of God before his eyes, and the love of God into his heart. Godliness leads to consecration, to sanctification, to concentration. Many who have the form of godliness are strangers to this power, and so are in religion worldly, in prayer mechanical, in public one thing, and in private another. True godliness lies in spiritual power, and as they are without this, they are dead while they live.

What is the general history of those who have not this power? Well, dear friends, their course usually runs thus: they do not begin with denying the power, but they begin by trying to do without it. They would like to become members of the church, and as they fear that they are not fit for it, they look about for something which looks like conversion and the new birth. They try to persuade themselves that they have been changed; they accept emotion as regeneration, and a belief of doctrine for a belief in Christ. It is rather hard at first to reckon brass as gold, but it grows easier as it is persisted in.

The next step is easy; *they deceive themselves*, and come to believe that they are surely saved. All is now right for eternity, so they fancy; and they fold their arms in calm security. Thus they deceive others, and help to strengthen themselves in their false hope. They use the choice phrases of earnest Christians. Mixing with them, they pick up their particular expressions, and pronounce Shibboleth in the most approved fashion.

At last they take

of denying the power. Being without it themselves, they conceive that others are without it also. Judging from their own case, they conclude that it is all an affair of words. *They* get on very well without any supernatural power, and others, no doubt, do the same; only they add a little cant to it to please the godly folk.

By and by, in some cases, these people profanely deny the divine power of our holy faith, and then they become the greatest enemies of the cross of Christ. Look at the Church of the present day; the advanced school, I mean. In its midst we see preachers who have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof. They talk of the Lord Jesus, but they deny His Godhead, which is His power; they speak of the Holy Spirit, but they deny His personality, wherein lies His very existence. They take away the substance and power from all the doctrines of revelation, though they pretend still to believe them. They talk of redemption, but they deny substitution, which is the essence of it; they extol the Scriptures, but deny their infallibility, wherein lies their value; they use the phrases of orthodoxy, and believe nothing in common with the orthodox. I know not which to loathe the most, their teachings or their spirit: surely they are worthy of each other. They burn the kernel and preserve the husks. "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." It is the sin of the age—the sin which is ruining the churches of our land.

II. In the second place, we are to observe

THE WICKED FOLLY

of this hypocritical conduct. First, they degrade the very name of Christ. Brethren, if there is no spiritual power in godliness, it is worth nothing. We want no clouds without rain. Of shams and mere pretences we have more than enough. Those who have not the power of godliness show us a very damaging picture of religion. They make out our Lord's religion to be comparable to a show at a country fair, with fine pictures and loud drumming on the outside, and nothing within worth a moment's consideration. The best of the show is on the outside; or if there be anything within, it is a masquerade where all act borrowed parts, but no one is what he seems to be.

The folly of this is illustrated by the fact that there is no value in such a dead form. The form of godliness without the power is not worthy the trouble it takes to put it together and keep it together. Imitation jewels are pretty and brilliant; but if you take them to the jeweler he will give you nothing for them. There must be a pure heart as well as a clean life; the power of godliness must work within, or else God will not accept our offering. Moreover, there is no comfort in it. The form without the power has nothing in it to warm the heart, to raise the spirits, or to strengthen the mind against the day of sickness or in the hour of death. O God, if my religion has been a mere form, what shall I do in the swelling of Jordan? My fine profession will all disappear, and nothing will come of it wherewith I may face the last

enemy. Are some of you possessors of a religion which never yields you a drop of comfort? Is it a bondage to you? Do you follow Christ as a slave follows his master? Away with such a religion!

To have the form of godliness without the power of it, is to lack constancy in your religion. You never saw

THE MIRAGE,

but those who have travelled in the East, when they come home are sure to tell you about it. It is a very hot and thirsty day, and you are riding on a camel. Suddenly there rises before you a beautiful scene. Just a little from you are brooks of water, flowing between beds of osiers and banks of reeds and rushes. Yonder are palm trees and orange groves. Yes, and a city rises on a hill, crowned with minarets and towers. You are rejoiced, and ask your guide to lead you nearer to the water which glistens in the sun. He grimly answers, "Take no notice: it is the mirage. There is nothing yonder but the burning sand." You can scarcely believe him, it seems so real; but lo! it is all gone, like a dream of night. So unsubstantial is the hope which is built upon the form of godliness without the power.

This nominal godliness, which is devoid of power, is a shameful thing. I close with that. It is a shameful thing for this life, for the Lord Jesus loathes it. When He passed by the fig-tree, which was so early with its leaves, but so empty of fruit, He saw therein the likeness of the vainglorious professor who has no real holiness, and He said, "Henceforth let no fruit

grow on thee forever." His word withered it at once: it stood a terrible emblem of the end of a false profession. How shameful will be

A LIFELESS POSSESSOR IN ETERNITY,

when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed! What shame and everlasting contempt will await him when his falsehood shall be detected, and his baseness shall fill all holy minds with horror! What will be the hell of the false professor!

I have done when I have added a few words of instruction. The form of godliness is most precious; let those who feel the power of godliness honor it and use it. Do not despise it because others have damaged it. Come forth, and make an open profession of religion; but see that you have the power of it. Do cry to God that you may never wear a sleeve which is longer than your arm; I mean, may never go beyond what is really and truly your own. It will be better for you to go to God as a lost soul, and cry for mercy, than to profess yourself saved when you are not. Yet do confess Christ without fail or fear.

My next is a word of discrimination. Those to whom my text has nothing to say will be the first to take it home to themselves. When I discharge my heart with a faithful sermon, certain trembling souls whom I would fain comfort are sure to think that I mean *them.*

A POOR WOMAN,

in deep distress, comes to me, crying, "Sir, I have no feeling." Dear heart, she has ten times too much feeling. Another moans out, "I am sure I am a hypo-

crite!" I never met with a hypocrite who thought himself one; and I never shall. "Oh!" said another, "I feel condemned." He that feels himself condemned may hope for pardon. If you are afraid of yourselves I am not afraid of you. If the Spirit of God leads you to weep in secret for sin, and to pray in secret for grace; if it leads you to seek after holiness; if it leads you to trust alone in Jesus—then you know the power of godliness, and you have never denied it.

Let me give you a word of admonition. Learn from the text that there is something in godliness worth the having. The "form" of godliness is not all; there is a blessed "power." The Holy Ghost is that power, and He can work in you to will and to do of God's good pleasure. Come you to Jesus Christ, dear souls. Do not come to the minister, nor to the church, in the first place, but come to Jesus. Come, and lay yourselves at His feet and say, "Lord, I will not be comforted unless Thou comfort me." Come, and take everything at first hand from your crucified Lord. Then shall you know the power of godliness. Beware of second-hand religion: it is never worth the carrying home. Get your godliness direct from heaven by the personal dealing of your own soul with your Saviour. The Lord bless these words and apply them to each one in His own way by His Holy Spirit! You can make either a blister of them, or a plaster of them, as conscience shall direct. God guide you, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

XV.

PROFITABLE MIXTURE.

TEXT—"*For unto us was the Gospel preached as well as unto them; but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.*" *Heb. 4:2.*

A LOFTY DESTINY MISSED.—A GRAVE INSTEAD OF A THRONE.—I. ISRAEL'S HEARING OF THE GOSPEL.—A GOSPEL OF REST FOR SLAVES.—OF REDEMPTION.—OF SEPARATION.—OF A PREPARED HERITAGE.—OF A DIVINE CALLING.—OF HELP ASSURED.—II. ISRAEL'S FAILURE TO PROFIT BY IT.—CLINGING TO EGYPT.—SETTING UP IDOLS.—DESPISING THE PROMISED LAND.—III. THE FATAL CAUSE OF THE CALAMITY.—NOT IN THE GOSPEL.—NOT IN THE PREACHER.—IN LACK OF FAITH.—THEREFORE COULD LEARN NOTHING.—APPROPRIATE NOTHING.—COULD NOT ENTER THE LAND.

THE people that came out of Egypt were an interesting company, if we think of what God had done on their behalf, and of what He proposed to do for them. They had been lifted up from a state of slavery into one of freedom, and they were on their way to a country where they were to be settled, each one upon his own portion of land, therein to become priests and kings unto God. What an unhappy circumstance that

THE HIGH IDEAL

set before them was never realized by any of them save two lone men—Joshua and Caleb! You hear them singing at the Red Sea, in exultant joy, and they are on their way to Canaan, the land that floweth with milk and honey: loud are their songs, and high are their hopes. But mark those lines of graves—those innumerable hillocks which were formed wher-

ever the camp was pitched in the desert. That is the end of the generation which came out of Egypt: "Their carcases fell in the wilderness." Instead of reaching Canaan and settling, every man under his own vine and fig-tree, they lie in dishonored graves outside of the land of promise.

Let us not follow in their track. We are far too much inclined to do so. They were men and we are no better than they by nature. Oh for grace to walk after a higher rule! Let a holy dread seize upon us at this time, such as that which Paul expresses in the words, "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." Let us not find a tomb when we might gain a throne. Let us not go down into the pit when before us lies the way to heaven, and multitudes are beckoning us thither. May great grace be given that we may win where a whole nation failed!

I. First, then, let us consider the way of

ISRAEL'S HEARING

of the Gospel. Whether you take it as our translators have put it in the Authorized Version, "Unto us was the Gospel preached as well as unto them," or accept the Revised rendering, "Indeed, we have had good tidings preached unto us, even as also they," it comes to much the same meaning: for the message of Moses and the reports of the faithful spies were both typical of the Gospel which was brought to us by our Lord and His apostles. Our Gospel is more clear than theirs; yet they had the Gospel also, in all

the essential truths of it, and had they fully believed it, it would have been a saving Gospel to them.

We shall notice, first, that the good news brought to Israel was a Gospel of rest for slaves, a promise of deliverance for men who cried by reason of sore bondage. This was a fit emblem of that news which comes to us in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. These men were made to labor to exhaustion. They had no rest from toil by day or night; and if they did not supply the full number of bricks, they were cruelly beaten by their taskmasters. Truly the tribes of Israel were in a very evil case. They groaned by reason of their bondage, and that promise was

A WONDERFUL GOSPEL

to them—"I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians." This is the kind of Gospel which is preached to us to-day. Does not Jesus say, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, and ye shall find rest unto your souls"? Spiritual rest is even more precious than bodily rest. The great promise of the Gospel is rest from the burden of guilt, the pressure of fear, the bondage of habit, the slavery of sin, the scourging of conscience, and the dread of wrath to come.

A GOSPEL OF REDEMPTION.

Note, next, that the good tidings to Israel was a Gospel of redemption in order to their entering into the promised rest. They were slaves to Pharaoh; how could they become dwellers in Canaan? They might truthfully say, "We cannot break our bonds." The

power of Egypt would hold Israel as with an iron hand. But with a high hand and an outstretched arm Jehovah their God determined to bring them out; and bring them out He did. Connected with that power of arm there was the price of sacrifice; for they were redeemed typically by the blood of the Passover Lamb. That blood sprinkled on the lintel and on the two side posts, preserved their houses when the destroying angel passed through the land of Egypt with his death-sword. This day I also preach to you rest through the divine omnipotence of the Holy Spirit, and through the sprinkling of the precious blood of the Lamb of God.

Furthermore, it was a Gospel of separation. When you read the words of the Lord to His chosen ones, you are compelled to see that He means them to be a people set apart for His own purposes. He no sooner began with them than the first summons was to Pharaoh, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me." Israel was in Egypt: but Israel was not a part of Egypt. No Israelite could become an Egyptian. As a distinct people they came into the land of Ham, and as a distinct people they went out of the land. Too much was Israel defiled by the customs of that heathen nation; but it was not absorbed in Egypt, nor did it cease to be a peculiar race. We are the Lord's portion, the lot of His inheritance. It is by means of this separation that we find rest. Our rest lies where God hath prepared it, and He cries, "Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest." Here we have no abiding city. Here we are "strangers and

foreigners, as all our fathers were." Yet even here the Church is

DISTINCT FROM THE WORLD

and cannot be made one with it. This is the Gospel of separation which leads on to rest. Until separated, there is no rest for us. Thus is it written, "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate; and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Thus you see that ours is a Gospel of rest, a Gospel of sacrifice, and a Gospel of separation from the rest of mankind. Hear it with more earnest heed than Israel gave to it; "For unto us is the Gospel preached, as well as unto them."

Still further, the Gospel preached to the Israelites told them of a glorious heritage which was provided for them. It was the fairest of all countries, an epitome of the whole world; and it was to be theirs as a freehold forever. Each tribe was to have its portion, each family its lot. This was good news to them; and all the more so because within the outward and temporal good news there was a spiritual Gospel. Even so are you told that there is a heritage, even a heavenly one, to which God bringeth His believing people, and of which He gives them an earnest even now, in the possession of His Holy Spirit. This heritage is, in a measure, ours even in this life; but into the fullness of its delight we shall enter when the Lord shall come and receive us unto Himself. O my hearers, you have all heard this Gospel of glory; have you all accepted it?

Once more: they had a Gospel which promised them help to obtain all this. It is a poor Gospel which sets heaven before us, but does not help us to enter it. To these Israelites journeying mercies and conquering aids were promised. The Lord said to them, "I will send my fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee. And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before thee." The like help for the attainment of heavenly blessedness is provided in the Gospel which we preach. All helps for the winning of the fadeless crown are waiting for them that believe. We are encouraged to go forward and take possession of the promises, for the Lord hath said, "Certainly I will be with thee." My dear hearer, do you embrace this Gospel? Do you find in it strength for the journey of life? See to it that you miss not the blessing.

II. But now, secondly, I have the painful business of setting briefly before you

ISRAEL'S FAILURE

to profit by the Gospel which they heard. Though they heard it from many, they clung to Egypt. One would think they would have abhorred the land of the iron furnace, and the brick-kiln; but no; at the first they said, "Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians." The signs and wonders that God wrought in the field of Zoan were almost as much needed to separate Israel from Egypt, as to loosen the cruel grasp of Pharaoh. The nation had not long

been quit of the land before they cried out, "Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? It had been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness." Again and again they sighed for the leeks and the garlic and the onions of Egypt, whining for

THE COARSE FOOD OF BONDAGE,

despising the bread from heaven. They talked as if the Lord had done them a great injury by setting them free from their taskmasters. Ah me! The Gospel which they heard did not profit them; for in their hearts they still tarried in the house of bondage.

Worse still, they provoked the Lord. By their murmurings, but chiefly by their idolatry, they vexed His Holy Spirit. Could you have believed it? After all the gods of Egypt had been smitten in detail by the plagues of Jehovah, yet the people remembered the idol god, the ox of Egypt, and they set up for their own worship what the Lord derisively called a "calf." They said, "These be thy gods, O Israel!" Truly the word preached had not profited them.

They went so far as to despise the promised land: they said, "It is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof." They would fain go back to Egypt rather than advance upon a scene of such great danger. They dared to speak as if death in Egypt had been preferable to the wilderness, for they would never be able to conquer the land. The spies whom they sent to spy out the land, ten of them flattered their humor and defamed the country. They could not deny that it flowed with milk and honey, for the fruits were

before them, and the clusters of Eshcol were convincing evidence of its fertility; but they said it ate up its inhabitants, implying that it was a deadly place to dwell in.

THE END OF IT

was, they died in the wilderness. Ah me! The whole generation died in the wilderness—these very men that stood by the Red Sea, and said, "I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance." They sang, "Sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestine. All the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away;" but, on the borders of the land they trembled, turned back into the wilderness, and died. To them the inspiring Gospel of the promised rest was altogether unprofitable.

O my hearers, fear and tremble lest it be the same with you! Let me go over this story once more, with a personal application. Do you still cling to sin? Do you still love it? Would you be willing to go to heaven, but are you unwilling to part with sin? Is the flavor of the onion of sinful pleasure still pleasant to your palate? Do you despise the goodly land? Do you say in your heart, "Heaven and heavenly things are too visionary for me; I have too much to do to earn my daily bread"? Are you sighing after flesh, after worldly wealth, and honor and pleasure? Do you loathe the manna of holy joy, and fellowship, and bliss, and life in Christ? Is it so? And are you fearing to-day that you never can do what you should do, and that you can never conquer your evil propen-

sities? Do you sit down supinely, judging your passions to be too strong to be subdued, your habits too firmly fixed to be changed? Are the giants too strong for you to slay them? Have you no trust in God, and in His boundless grace? If so, O sirs, I fear me your carcases will fall in the wilderness; your dying hour will come, and you will have no hope. A whole nation missed the rest of God; it will not be a wonder if you and I miss it, who are but one or two, unless we take earnest heed, and are filled with fear "lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of us should seem to come short of it."

III. So now, thirdly, I am going to put my finger upon

THE FATAL CAUSE

of this direful calamity. Why was it the Gospel that they heard did not profit them? Assuredly, it was not the fault of the Gospel which they heard. In itself it is calculated to profit all who receive it. It promised liberty, and this should have made them gratefully obedient. It promised an inheritance, and added to it a high and holy calling, and this should have aroused their loftiest aspiration. It promised every help to the getting of the promised blessings; and what could they have more? Concerning the Gospel which I have preached to you, I can truly say that if you miss blessedness, it is not because you are straitened in the Gospel, or are discouraged by the narrowness of the Lord's grace. Pardon of sin, justification of your persons, the salvation of your souls, and everlasting bliss; what more can be set before

you? If this does not touch you, what will? In their case it was not the fault of the preacher; for Moses spoke God's Word with great meekness and gentleness. He set before them the truth with all fidelity. With all my imperfection, I hope I can say, also, that if you die in the wilderness, I am clear of your blood; for I have warned you to escape, and I have bidden you seek, first, the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Well, then, what was the cause? We put our finger on it at once: "Not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." Where there is no faith in the Gospel, no good consequence can possibly come of it. If it were preached to you by angels, yea, if one arose from the dead and proclaimed it to you, if you believed it not what could be the beneficial effect of hearing it? Men, why do you hear it if you do not mean to believe it? If you will be damned, why do you throng this place to hear about salvation? If you are resolved that you will not have the promise of God, why come and listen to His servant, who has nothing else to tell you? Are we set up to be as marionettes, or dancing dolls, for you to stare at? God forbid that we should ever accept the calling of actors in a play! If we do not win your hearts for Christ, and so save you, we have labored in vain, and spent our strength for nought. See the effect of absence of faith, and lament it.

Where there is no faith, men remain

SLAVES TO THE PRESENT.

If they did not believe in the milk and honey of Ca-

naan, you see why they hankered for the cucumbers of Egypt. An onion is nothing comparable to an estate beyond Jordan; yet, as they think they cannot get the estate, they pine for the onions. When men do not believe in eternal life they naturally enough cry, "Give me bread and cheese! Let me have a fortune here!" They keep their nose to the grindstone, always thinking about this passing life, because they do not heartily believe in heaven and its glories. They are as "dumb-driven cattle," that see not into another state; this life seems real to them, but the next life they suspect to be a dream. As long as there is no faith, this world is all, and the world to come is nothing at all.

If a man hears and has no faith, he learns nothing. What would be the use of your listening to lectures upon science if you disbelieved what the professor set forth? You are no pupil—you are a critic, and

YOU CANNOT LEARN.

Many professors have no faith, and, consequently, whoever may teach them, they will never come to a knowledge of the truth. Israel never saw through the almost transparent veil of the types because they did not believe. Want of faith means want of eye and want of perception.

A man that has no faith in what he hears does not appropriate it. There is gold! Eagerly one crieth, "Let me go and get it!" Unbelief restrains him, as it whispers, "There is no gold, or it is beyond reach." He does not go to get it, for he does not believe. Unbelief palsies the hand, and it appropriates nothing.

That which is not appropriated can be of no use to you. Look at your food. How is it that it builds up your body? Because you take it into the mouth, and it descends into the stomach, and there it is mixed with certain fluids, and is digested, and ultimately is taken up into the system and becomes a life-sustaining force. Being properly mixed, it is taken up and assimilated. And so it is with heavenly truth: if it is taken into the heart, and then mixed with faith, it is digested, and becomes food to every part of the spiritual nature.

Lastly, these people could not enter in because they had no faith. They could go to the border of the land, but they must die even there. They could send their spies into the country, but they could not see the fertile valleys themselves. Without faith they could not enter Canaan. Shall it be so with us, that, for want of faith, we shall hear the Gospel, know something about its power, and yet miss its glories, and never enter into possession of the life eternal which it reveals? Here is the point: "They could not enter in because of unbelief."

Still, *the great necessity is faith.* Instead of speaking upon that subject, let me beg you to

DO A LITTLE MIXING AT ONCE.

Don't mix philosophy with the Gospel, but by the help of God's Spirit mix faith with it. Before us is the glorious Word made flesh, in the eternal Son of God in our nature! He lives for men; He dies to make atonement for sin. Even He cannot save you unless you now mix faith with all those truths about

Him which the Scriptures teach you. Now mix faith with what you know concerning the Saviour, and say, "Lord, I believe that Thou art the Son of God. I believe that Thou didst live a perfect life, which is our righteousness. I believe that Thou didst die a painful death, which brings us pardon. I believe that Thou ever livest to intercede. I trust my soul in Thy hands." That is mixing faith with the Gospel, and you will in this fashion richly profit by the Gospel. You will go your way a saved man.

Try what you can do with eternal life itself. Say, "Lord, I believe that there is a spiritual life which Thou dost breathe into believers. I believe that this grows from grace to glory. Thou givest to believers eternal life even here; death cannot kill it, and so they live on, and on, and on, throughout eternity, forever blessed in Christ. I believe in the new creation. I appropriate it. I trust in Jesus for it. This heritage is mine! By faith I take it to myself." God will never take away what you can grasp by faith. Mix faith with every promise. Henceforth continue to practice the holy art of mixing faith with the revelations of Scripture. Compound them as the dispensers do. Here is a choice drug, but it wants mixing with its proper affinity; the promise must be mixed with faith if it is to be life-giving to the soul. Mix it, then, with faith, and be profited immediately and eternally. Be united to the truth and it will save you. Let it come into union with you, and you will never perish. The Lord help you to be joined unto His truth by faith, for Christ's sake. Amen.

XVI.

WHY JESUS WEPT.

TEXT—"*Jesus wept.*" *John 11 :35.*

HIS WHOLE NATURE STIRRED. — CONFRONTED WITH DEATH, THE PRODUCT OF SIN. — WHAT CAUSED THE SINLESS ONE TO WEEP.—I. HE WAS TRULY MAN.—WITH HUMAN EMOTIONS AND SYMPATHIES. — THE THREE OCCASIONS OF HIS WEEPING.—II. NOT ASHAMED OF HUMAN WEAKNESS. — ADMITTED HIS POVERTY. — DID NOT CONCEAL HIS SUFFERING. — III. AN INSTRUCTOR IN WEEPING.—IN PRAYER. — IN AWAKENING DEAD SOULS. — IN MOURNING THE LOSS OF FRIENDS. — IV. AS A COMFORTER. — EXPERIENCED IN SORROW. — HIS WEEPING OVER. — V. AS AN EXAMPLE.—HE WEPT FOR OTHERS.—HELP FOLLOWING.

A GREAT storm was stirring the mind of Jesus. We find, on looking at the original, that He was indignant and troubled. We have a very literal translation in the margin of the Revised Version; and instead of reading, "He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled," we find it, "He was moved with indignation in the spirit, and troubled Himself." What was this indignation? We cannot think that it was caused by the unbelief of His friends, or even by the pretended sympathy of those malicious Jews who hastened to accuse Him to the Pharisees; but we look further and deeper for the reason of this heat. He now stood face to face with the last enemy, death. He saw what sin had done in destroying life, and even in corrupting the fair handiwork of God in the human body: He marked, also, the share which Satan had in all this, and His indignation was aroused; yea,

HIS WHOLE NATURE WAS STIRRED.

Between indignation at the powers of evil, grief for the family who had been bereaved by death, sorrow over those who stood by in unbelief, and a distressing realization of the effects of sin, the Lord's heart was evidently in a great storm. Instead of the thunder of threatening, and the lightning of a curse, all that was perceptible of the inward tempest was a shower of tears; for "Jesus wept."

"Jesus wept." I have often felt vexed with the man, whoever he was, who chopped up the New Testament into verses. He seems to have let the hatchet drop indiscriminately here and there; but I forgive him a great deal of blundering for his wisdom in letting these two words make a verse by themselves: "Jesus wept." This is a diamond of the first water, and it cannot have another gem set with it, for it is unique. Shortest of verses in words, but where is there a longer one in sense? Add a word to the verse, and it would be out of place. No, let it stand in solitary sublimity and simplicity. There is infinitely more in these two words than any sermonizer or student of the Word will ever be able to bring out of them, even though he should apply the microscope of the most attentive consideration. "Jesus wept." Instructive fact; simple but amazing; full of consolation; worthy of our earnest heed.

I. First, "Jesus wept," for He is truly man. Many facts prove the completeness of our Lord's taking up of our nature. Not in phantasm was

JESUS A MAN;

but in reality and truth He became one of us. He suffered all the innocent infirmities of our nature. He was weary: "Jesus being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well." That He thirsted, we know, for He said to the Samaritan woman, "Give Me to drink"; and on the cross He cried in burning fever, "I thirst!" In all things He was made like unto His brethren. "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." His humanity was our humanity to the full, although without sin.

He wept, for He had human friendships. Friendship is natural to man. Scarcely is he a man who never had a friend to love. Men in going through the world make many acquaintances, but out of these they have few special objects of esteem, whom they call friends. If they think to have friends, they are, probably, misusing the name. All wise and good men have about them choice spirits, with whom their intercourse is more free, and in whom their trust is more confident, than in all others. Jesus delighted to find retirement in the quiet home at Bethany; and we read that "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." Alas, my brethren! every friendship opens a fresh door for grief; for friends are no more immortal than ourselves. "Jesus wept" at the grave of His friend just as you and I have done, and must needs do again.

"Jesus wept," for He was truly human in His sympathies. He did not merely walk about among us, and look like a man, but at a thousand points He came into

CONTACT WITH US.

Jesus was always in touch with sorrow: happy are they that are in touch with *Him!* Our Lord saw Mary and Martha weeping, and the Jews weeping that were with them, and He caught the contagion of their grief: "Jesus wept." His sympathies were with sorrowing ones, and for this reason, among others, He was Himself "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."

He was a man, dear friends, for He was stirred with human emotions. Every emotion that ever thrilled through your bosom, so far as it is not sinful, has had its like in the bosom of the Lord Jesus Christ. He could be angry: we read in one place, that "He looked round about on them with anger." He could be pitiful; when was He not so? He could be moved with compassion for a fainting crowd, or with scorn of a crafty ruler. Did He not speak with great indignation of the scribes and Pharisees? Yet was He not tender as a nurse with a child, when cheering the penitent? He would not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax; yet He uttered faithful warnings, and made terrible exposures of hypocrisy.

Beloved, have a clear faith in the humanity of Him whom they rightly worship as your Lord and your God. Holding His divinity without doubt, hold His manhood without mistake. Realize the actual manhood of Jesus in all lights.

THREE TIMES HE WEPT.

Doubtless He sorrowed full often when He was not seen; but thrice He was known to weep. The

instance in our text was the weeping of a friend over the grave of a friend. A little further on, after a day of triumph, our Lord beheld the city, and wept over it; that was the weeping of a prophet concerning judgments which He foresaw. It is not recorded by any evangelist, but Paul tells us, in the Epistle to Hebrews, that, with strong crying and tears, He made appeal to Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared. This third record sets forth the weeping of our Substitute, a sacrificial weeping, a pouring out of Himself as an oblation before God. Treasure up in your mind these three memories, the weeping of the friend in sympathy with bereavement, the weeping of the Judge lamenting the sentence which He must deliver, and the weeping of the Surety as He smarts for us, bearing griefs which were not His own, for sins in which He had no share. Thus thrice was it true that "Jesus wept."

II. Now, let us change the line of our thought a little, while we say, "Jesus wept," that is,

HE WAS NOT ASHAMED

of His human weakness. He could have repressed His tears—many men do so habitually. I do not doubt that there may be great sorrow, very great sorrow, where there is no open expression of it. In fact, most of you must have felt times when grief has struck you such a stunning blow that you could not weep, you could not recover yourself sufficiently to shed tears: the heart was all on fire with auguish, and the eyes refused the cooling drops. The Saviour could, doubtless, if so He wished, have hidden His

grief; but He did not choose to do so, for He was never unnatural. As "the holy child Jesus," He was free from pride, and wore His heart where men could see it.

For, first, remember His talk when He spoke to His disciples. He never concealed His poverty. There is an idea abroad that respectability is maintained by the pretence of riches, whereby real need is hidden. It is thought disreputable to seem to be poor, even when you are so. There may be something in the affectation, but our Lord did not countenance such a course, for He said, "Foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." Though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, and He was never ashamed to let it be known that

HE WAS POOR.

Jesus wept on this occasion, although it might have been misunderstood and misrepresented. Do you not think that the Jews who stood there would sneeringly say, "See, He weeps! The miracle-worker weeps! He calls Himself the Son of God, and yet He stands weeping there like any ordinary man"? Here was opportunity for scorn at His manifest weakness, and even for blasphemy at the evident token of it; but our Lord did not act upon policy; He allowed His true feeling to be seen. Tears may not be thought manly, but they are natural to man, and Jesus will not be unnatural.

"Jesus wept," and thereby He revealed His love to Lazarus, so that others saw it and cried, "Behold

how He loved him!" This is one proof that our Lord does not hesitate to declare His love to His people. When He sojourned upon earth He was not ashamed to find friends among ordinary mortals. Our glorious Lord, now that He is enthroned, "is not ashamed to call us brethren." He is not ashamed to be written down in the same heavenly register as His poor people. Blessed be His name!

THE BURDEN-BEARER.

"Jesus wept:" He was not ashamed to own the affliction which sin caused to His holy soul, nor the gash which the sight of death made in His heart. He could not bear to see the grave and its corruption. May we never think of the sin and misery of our race without sorrow! I confess I can never go through this huge city without feeling unhappy. I never pass from end to end of London without feeling a black and dark cloud, hanging like a pall over my spirit. How my heart breaks for thee, O sinful city of London! Is it not so with you, my brethren? Think of its slums, its sins, its poverty, its ungodliness, its drunkenness, its vice! These may well go through a man's heart like sharp swords. How Jesus would have wept in London! He could not stand in the front of a lone grave, about to look upon a single corpse, without weeping. He saw in that one death the representation of what sin has done on so enormous a scale, that it is impossible to compute the devastation; and therefore He wept.

"Jesus wept," though He was about to work a wonderful miracle. The glory of His Godhead did

not make Him ashamed of His manhood. Singular thing, too, that He should weep just before the joy of raising the dead to life. He is God, for He is about to call Lazarus out of the grave; but He is man just as much as ever, and therefore He weeps. Our Lord was as much man when He raised the dead as when He worked in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth. He was not ashamed to own His real manhood, while He proved Himself the resurrection and the life. Beloved, "Jesus wept" to show that He did not disdain the feebleness of that nature which He had taken up, that He might redeem it unto God.

III. Thirdly, our Lord Jesus is

OUR INSTRUCTOR IN WEEPING.

This is the most practical part of our discourse; be sure that you receive it by the teaching of the Holy Ghost. Observe why Jesus wept, and learn a lesson from it. He wept because this was His method of prayer on this occasion. A great miracle was to be wrought, and great power was needed from on high; as man, the Lord Jesus cries to God with intense earnestness, and finds the fittest embodiment for His prayer in weeping. Before the Lord Jesus puts forth the power which raises Lazarus from the grave, He appeals to God with strong crying and tears, "Jesus wept" to teach us how to baptize our prayers in a wave of heart-grief.

"Jesus wept" again, because before He would arouse the dead He would be Himself aroused. Without great exertion of the life of Jesus, the death in Lazarus could not be subdued. Therefore the

Lord aroused Himself, and stirred up all His strength troubling all His being for the struggle on which He entered. Learn hence, my brother, that if you think to do any great good in saving sinners, you must not be half asleep yourself: you must be troubled even to tears. Perhaps the most difficult thing in winning souls is to get ourselves into a fit state. The dead may *bury* the dead, but they cannot *raise* the dead. Until a man's whole soul is moved, he will not move his fellow. We must feel, if others are to feel. Come, my dear sister, you that are going to the Sunday-school class this afternoon because you must go; you must not go in that spirit. You, my brothers, who are going to preach or talk to your classes, and have as yet only one eye open; this will never do. Your Lord was all alive, and all sensitive, and you must be the same.

Jesus wept in full knowledge of several things which might have prevented His weeping. You have sometimes thought to yourself when weeping at the grave of a dear child, or wife, or husband, that you have been wrong in so doing; but this may not be the case. Our Saviour wept, though He knew that

LAZARUS WAS SAFE.

I do not know what had happened to the soul of Lazarus: where Scripture is silent it is not mine to speak; but, wherever he was, he was perfectly safe; and yet "Jesus wept." Moreover, Jesus knew that He was going to raise Lazarus to life; his resurrection was close at hand and yet "Jesus wept." Sometimes we are told that if we really believed that our

friends would rise again, and that they are safe and happy, we could not weep. Why not? Jesus did.

"Jesus wept," but He did not sin. There was not even a particle of evil in any one of the Redeemer's tears. When He spoke in His sorrow, the first word was "Father:" He said, "Father, I thank Thee." If you can weep in such a way that all the while you feel God to be your Father, and can thank Him, and know that you are in His presence, your weeping is not blameworthy, but healthful. "Jesus wept," but He never murmured. "Jesus wept," but He never found fault with God's dispensations.

IV. I must be brief upon my fourth point. "Jesus wept:" in this He is

OUR COMFORTER.

Let me speak to those who are of heavy heart. "Jesus wept:" herein is our honor. Thou weepest, my friend, in good company; for Jesus wept. Let no man censure thee lest they not only blame thee, but Jesus also. "Jesus wept:" herein is our sonship vindicated. Thou sayest, "Can I be the child of God, and yet go weeping?" Was not Jesus the well-beloved Son? and yet He wept. Ah! the question lies another way: "What son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" What child did God ever have that did not weep? He had one Son without sin; but He never had a son without sorrow. He had a Son that never deserved a stroke of the rod, and yet against that Son the sword was awakened. Mourner, thou art one of "The Worshipful Company of Weepers," of whom Jesus is the Worthy Master. He is at the

head of the Clan of Mourners: thou mayest well wear the plaid with the black and red crosses upon it; for thy Chieftain wore the same.

See now the real sympathy of Christ with His people, for herein is comfort. Jesus is our fellow-sufferer; and this should be our greatest solace. Oh, if we had a High-priest that knew not what it is to suffer as we do, it would be a most unhappy thing for us! If we fled to Him for refuge, and found that He had known no grief, and consequently could not understand us, it would be killing to a broken heart. A Jesus who never wept could never wipe away my tears. That were a grief I could not bear, if He could not have fellowship with me, and could not understand my woe.

Beloved, think how bravely our Lord endured; herein is confidence. Tears did not drown the Saviour's hope in God. He lived. He triumphed notwithstanding all His sorrow; and because He lives, we shall live also. He says, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Though our hero had to weep in the fight, yet He was not beaten. He came, He wept, He conquered. You and I take scot and lot with Jesus; we share the tears of His eyes, and we shall share the diamonds of His crown.

V. Fifthly, and lastly, "Jesus wept;" in this He is our example. We should weep, for

JESUS WEPT FOR OTHERS.

I know not that He ever wept for Himself. His were sympathetic tears. He embodied that command, "Weep with them that weep." He has a narrow soul who can hold it all within the compass of his ribs.

A true soul, a Christly soul, lives in other men's souls and bodies as well as in its own. A perfectly Christly soul finds all the world too narrow for its abode, for it lives and loves; it lives by loving, and loves because it lives. Think of other weepers, and have pity upon the children of grief.

In another matter our Lord is our example; learn from Him that our indignation against evil will best show itself in compassion for sinners. Ah, my dear friend! I heard you declaiming tremendously against drunkenness. I am glad to hear you; you cannot say anything too hard or too heavy about that degrading vice; but, I pray you, wind up your denunciation with weeping over the poor drunkard. I heard you speak, my other friend, on behalf of the League of Purity, and you smote the monsters of lasciviousness with all your force. I wish more strength to your arm! But when you have done, sit down and weep that such filthiness should defile men and women who are your fellow creatures. Appeal to parliament, if you wish, for the putting down of vice; but parliament itself first needs correcting and purifying. A flood of tears before the thrice Holy God will do far more than the hugest rolls of petition to our senators. "Jesus wept," and His

TEARS WERE MIGHTY WEAPONS

against sin and death. You feel indignant at the lazy, idle, loafing vagabonds whose very illness is produced by their own vice; I cannot condemn your virtuous wrath. But if you would in all things imitate Jesus, please note that it is not written that Jesus thundered,

but that "Jesus wept." Let indignation have pity mixed with it. I like not lightning without rain, nor indignation without tears. I know what you will say about the lack of thrift among the poor, about the absence of sobriety, the want of industry, and so forth. Admit all this sorrowfully; chide it tenderly; and then weep. You will do more good to the offenders, and more good to yourself, and more good to the best of causes, if pity moistens all. You may, if you will, beat the terrible drum, and sound the war-trumpet; but the noise will rather deafen than soften. The voice of your weeping will be heard deep down in the soul, and work more wonders than thunders of denunciation.

WHAT CAME OF IT.

Lastly, when you have wept, *imitate your Saviour—do something!* If the chapter before us had finished with "Jesus wept," it would have been a poor one. Suppose after they had come to the grave, we had read "Jesus wept, and went about His daily business," I should have felt small comfort in the passage. If nothing had come of it but tears, it would have been a great falling off from the usual ways of our blessed Lord. Tears! what are they alone? Salt water! A cup of them would be of little worth to anybody. But, beloved, "Jesus wept," and then He commanded, "Roll away the stone." He cried, "Lazarus, come forth." When Lazarus struggled out of the tomb, Jesus said, "Loose him and let him go." Some of you are full of pity for the sick; but I hope we shall not end in mere sentiment. Do not let us say, "We

were moved to sympathize with the sick, but we gave an awfully bad collection!" I should be ashamed to think of this morning's meditation if it ended so. No, no; if you cannot raise the dead, give something towards rolling away the stone which shuts the poor out of the hospital; if you cannot restore them to health, at least do something towards removing their maladies. Loose them from this crowded city, and send them into the country to a convalescent home. Brethren, we can thus practically prove our sympathy; therefore, *pass the boxes round!*

XVII.

THE PROMISED REST.

TEXT—"*For we which have believed do enter into rest, as He said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into My rest.*" *Hebrews 4:3.*

A PROMISE EMBEDDED IN A THREATENING.—GOD'S RESTS.—TO BE SHARED BY HIS PEOPLE.—I. TO WHOM THE REST IS CONFINED. —THOSE WHO HAVE BELIEVED.—HAVE FAITH IN REVELATION. —HAVE TRUSTED THEMSELVES TO CHRIST. — ARE CONSISTENT IN LIFE. — TYPICAL CASES OF RESTLESSNESS. — II. THE REST ITSELF.—RESTING IN CHRIST'S PERSON. — IN HIS WORK. — IN HIS PERPETUAL LIFE. — ITS LIMITS. — III. THE PERSONAL TESTIMONY.—A POSITIVE ASSERTION OF EXPERIENCE.— A MINISTER'S TEARFUL CONFESSION. — REST NOT RUST. — SILLY BOASTERS OF PERFECTION. — OBSTACLES IN THE WAY. — A PARABLE.

IN the text we have a declaration of experience, "We which have believed do enter into rest," to which is very singularly added, "As He said, As I have sworn in My wrath, if they shall enter into My rest." The happy declaration is supported by the tremendous oath of judgment, which shut out the unbelieving race. There is a promise embedded in a threatening,

LIKE GOLD IN QUARTZ:

just as there is generally a threatening as the reverse of the golden coin of promise. When we read, in the opening chapters of the Bible, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," it was implied, was it not, that if they did not eat they should live? Though that promise was not stated in words, it was implied in the threatening. So here, when we read, "I have sworn in My wrath, if they shall enter into

My rest," while we are taught that some could not enter in because of unbelief; it is implied in it that believers would enter in. Those who have faith in the divine promise shall enter in. If unbelief shuts men out, then faith is the door of entrance to those who have it. Beloved, this morning I earnestly pray that you may be able to join in the declaration before us. Though nearly nineteen hundred years have passed away, it is still true of those who believe, that they enter into rest. Some of us are now resting where the Lord rests, and our rest is daily deepening, so that it will only need a moment's change, and we shall rest with God in glory.

I. Follow me in meditation while we consider *the people to whom this experience is confined. They* rest, and no one else; they rest, because they have believed. As surely as unbelief shuts out, so surely does faith shut in.

WHAT IS IT TO BELIEVE?

To believe is, first of all, to accept as true the revelation of God; to give unfeigned assent and consent to all that God has made known in His Word, and especially to believe that He was, "in Christ Jesus, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." We cannot take the further step of trust unless, first, we give credence to the testimony of God. In reference to the work of our Lord Jesus, we must, first, accept the facts concerning Him, and the witness of God about Him, or we cannot go further. We bow our judgments, our questionings, our consciences, our faith, before the

throne of the Lord God of truth. This is an essential ground-work for saving faith.

The operative point of faith is the next one; we trust ourselves with Him who is revealed; thus we carry our belief of truth to its practical conclusion. We come, just as we are, to the Saviour who bids us come; we rely for our salvation and acceptance with God upon the Lord Jesus Christ as the Father reveals Him. Chiefly do we receive Him as our substitute, and in consequence, our sacrifice. We believe in Him as bearing our sins in His own body on the tree; as made sin for us, though He knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. He hath not the faith which will bring him to heaven who doth not wholly trust himself with God in Christ.

Out of this trust must come action agreeable thereunto. He that trusts Christ appropriates to himself the blessings contained in Him, and henceforth they become his heart's treasure, and this changes the whole tone of his life. He that trusts in Christ becomes obedient to his Saviour's word; just as the sailor who trusts his pilot yields to him the steering of the ship. This leads the believer to flee from sin: he sees that no good can come thereby, but only deadly evil. This leads to a daily rejoicing in Christ; for in proportion as we trust the Lord, and are governed by that trust, we become happy in the Lord. When we can say, "He is all my salvation and all my desire," we shall not be afraid even on a dying bed. So far as I am trusting, I am resting.

According to the statement of the writer of this

epistle, faith, wherever it exists, brings with it rest. Let me sketch three or four

CASES IN PROOF,

such as I have seen myself. Yonder is a man who has come to a right idea of his guilt before God. He went on merrily enough for years, till the Holy Spirit shone into his soul, and caused him to see the evil of his life. He began to think. Looking back upon his past conduct, he became uneasy; for he felt that he had lived without God, and therefore he had lived an unprofitable life towards his best Friend. He became greatly disturbed in spirit, not only by day, but even by night: his dreams were tinctured with fear. He felt that he was all wrong, and he feared he could never be set right. In such a condition rest is out of the question. What is to be done? In eager desire he goes from one place of worship to another, and he reads the Scriptures and godly books; but he finds no rest, and he will find none until he begins to see Jesus. How often have I seen the enlightenment which comes of faith! When the man sees that God is full of love towards him, that He is willing to receive him, guilty as he is, and to blot out all his sin for Jesus' sake; that Christ on the tree bore the penalty of his transgressions—then, I say, an enlightenment comes over his soul. I have seen the countenance transfigured as the divine witness has shone into the mind.

Observe another case. This person was once a Christian professor, leading the way in public service; but he declined gradually, and at last he fell into

grievous open sin. He has been cut off from the visible church; and necessarily so, for he has wandered into sinful habits, and mixed with evil associates. He is ill at ease. Like an unquiet spirit, he is seeking rest, and finding none. If there had been nothing of grace in his heart, he might have been satisfied with the husks of the world; but he has enough grace remaining in him to make him miserable. His foot finds no resting place. He is not willing, as yet, to go back to the church; and yet he cannot be content away from the fold. He is as a bird which has wandered from its nest, or a dog which has lost its master. It is only as that man beholds again the vision of the Crucified Lover of his soul that he will see a hope of rest.

I have seen the like result of faith in another case, which is very different from the last. A Christian man endowed with large power of thought, in an evil hour quitted his moorings and drifted out into the deep. He saw others sailing on the great and wide sea, and he thought it a brave thing to imitate them. He has

LOST HIS COMPASS,

and does not believe in his chart. My distracted brother, your only hope of intellectual rest lies in believing your God. Oh that you would subject your intellect to the Holy Spirit! Come, cast away your pride, and sit at the feet of Jesus. Become a little child, that you may enter the kingdom. Have you not had enough of this plague of the period — the thing which betrays his character by calling itself

"*honest* doubt"? While you are your own guide, you will go astray; but when you will place your hand in that hand which bears the nail-prints, you shall be safe and happy. "We which have believed do enter into rest," and the rest is not that of ignorance and agnosticism, but of clear knowledge, for we know and have believed the love which God hath towards us.

Let me give you one more picture. Tread softly, for the shadow of death is over yonder bed! Weakness will scarce bear the sound of your footfall. His pulse is faint and few, the man is dying! See how his tender wife wipes the death-sweat from his brow! Come hither, ye philosophers, and cheer his last hours with the joys of evolution! Come, ye advocates of a new theology, and cheer him with your criticism! Poor heart, he sees no consolation in all that you can set before him. He turns himself to the Lord Jesus, and cries:

> "Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
> Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;
> Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
> In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me."

If he can but see "the sacred head once wounded," he will have rest. How sweet! how deep! how perfect that rest will be! Men die not when they breathe their last with the living Saviour near them. In unruffled calm the spirit takes its flight from earth, and that word is fulfilled, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors."

Thus have I set before you who these people are;

they are not those who merely talk of religion, but they have true faith in God. They do not hesitate and delay, but they have once for all believed, and are now walking by faith. They are not questioners, but they believe God with a simple, child-like confidence. These are they that enter into rest, and nobody else will ever do so. I wish some of you would take this decisive step, and end this wretched pretence of wisdom, this self-conceited trust in "culture:" for it will be your greatest gain in life to trust your God, and enter into rest.

II. Our second point is *the experience itself:* "we which have believed do enter into rest." I shall now speak of what I know of a surety, and of what many of you know also. We will propound no theory, and indulge no imagination, but keep to matters of fact.

WHEREIN DO WE REST?

Brethren, we rest where God rests: that is, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. To the Father and to us He is the place of our common rest. How happy are we to find rest in a person! This is warm and substantial comfort. You cannot rest in the words of a doctrine as you can in the bosom of a person. Take a poor child who is lost in the street. Talk to it upon cheering themes. These ought to comfort it: but the little one goes on crying. Sing to it, and reason with it. It is all in vain. Run, fetch its mother! See how it smiles! It nestles in her bosom, and is at rest. A person yields the heart-comfort. So it is with our Lord Jesus Christ. In

life, in death, it is a delightful thought that our salvation rests in the hand of a living, loving personality; we depend upon a divine and human person, an accessible helper, to whom we may come at all times.

Next, we rest in His work. That work I can only roughly outline to you. It was a life of perfect obedience, completed by a death of shame and agony. The life and the death were all for us: in our room and place He obeyed and suffered. "It pleased the Father to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief;" and because of that bruising and grief, it is written, "The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness' sake; He will magnify the law, and make it honorable." Sinners are reconciled to God, and all offence is removed out of the way. Beloved, when you get a faith's view of the work of the Redeemer, do you not feel that all your fears and forebodings are sweetly laid to rest? The full Atonement, the perfect Righteousness, the glorious Victory, are not all these resting-places?

I scarcely need to mention, as a separate item, the perpetual life of Christ. We have not a dead Saviour. Lift up your eyes, and see your Lord upon the throne! Behold Him risen from the dead, and know that

HE IS COMING SOON,

in all His glory, to receive you unto Himself. I ask you if you cannot find perfect rest in the thought that He ever liveth, and is therefore able to save to the uttermost? Yes, preach Christ to the soul; He is true balm for its wounds. The love of Jesus is a pillow

for every aching head. Let our Lord be near, and like John, we find rest upon His bosom.

Do you ask me what is comprehended in this rest? I answer—all things. Here we lay every burden down. Personally, I do at this moment rest in Jesus as to all the *past*. Whatever there has been of sin to grieve over, whatever of mistakes, folly, or wrong—all this is no more my load, for it was laid on

JESUS AS MY SCAPEGOAT,

and He carried it away into the wilderness of forgetfulness. He has finished transgression, and made an end of sin. I also rest in Him in reference to the *present*. Whatever there may be of evil occurrent, or of need pressing, or of danger secret, or of slander foul, I leave all with Him in whom my soul reposes, who says to me, "Let not your heart be troubled." They say there is a skeleton in every house; I know of none in mine; yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil. Concerning to-day we enter into rest. But there is the *future!* We can leave the future where we leave the past. He that believeth thus enters into rest as to the past, the present, and the future. We cast all our cares on our Lord, for He careth for us.

What are the excellencies of this rest which comes by believing? I answer, they are very many. It is a wonderful source of strength. When the tree strikes deep root it gets vigor for fruitage. No man has any great power to work successfully while he is worried. The fulcrum must rest, or the lever will not work. Fret creates a great leakage in a man, and

his force runs away uselessly; but when care is ended, and he enters into rest with Christ, then all the force and energy of His being turns to holy service for God and man. This rest also brightens life. When you enter into rest life is not a dull and dreary round, such as the blind horse finds at the mill. Life is not a chain, which we must drag behind us, but wings on which we soar into the joyous blue, and hold converse with the choristers of heaven.

What are the limits of this rest? We may place them where we will. "According to your faith, so be it unto you." "We which have believed, do *enter* into rest." It is an entrance, and no more, as yet. But when an Israelite had an entrance into Canaan, it was his own fault if he did not penetrate the interior, and traverse the land from Dan to Beersheba. "Ask, and ye shall receive." "All things are possible to him that believeth." If you are not perfectly restful, it is not the fault of the rest.

III. I must draw your attention to

THE PERSONAL ASSERTION

of this experience: "We which have believed, do enter into rest." I like the plain and positive speech of the apostle for himself and his friends. My opponent cries, "You are too dogmatical, and too positive." To which I reply, "I cannot help being dogmatic when I say that I see what I know I have seen, and declare that I feel what I know I am feeling." Would you have me doubt my own consciousness?

I do not invite any of you to say that faith gives you peace unless it does so. It must be a matter of

fact. We want no empty profession. I remember hearing of a pious minister who was asked to speak one day upon the subject of joy in God. He stood up and said, "I am sorry that I have been requested to speak upon this topic; for the fact is, I am not walking in the light, but I am crying, 'Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation.' I have grieved my heavenly Father, and I am in the dark." He sat down and sobbed: and so did all his brethren. This honest confession did far more good than if he had patched up a tale, and told of some stale experience years before. If you have not entered into rest, do not say that you have.

"Well," cries one, "we do not rest, we are hard at work for our Lord." And so am I; but this is rest to me, now that I am at peace with God. The labor of love for Christ is only another word for rest. He says, "Take My yoke upon you: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Carry Christ's burden, and your shoulders shall have rest. We do not mean sleep or idleness when we speak of rest: that is

NOT REST, BUT RUST.

Our rest is found in the service of God. "Oh," says one, "I find a conflict going on within me." Do you? So do I. Who does not feel a struggle while pressing forward towards perfection? Can there be rest where there is conflict? I answer, assuredly. He that is at rest in his heart is the man to fight. While he cries, "Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" he is able at once to add, "I thank God through Jesus

Christ our Lord." "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed." Our confidence in Christ is not shaken, though all confidence in ourselves is gone. The more we see of our wretchedness and vileness by nature, the more we rest in Jesus. This declaration, that we have rest, should always be made with a holy purpose. We must not go about boasting of our peace. That is what little children do who know no better; they say, "Look at my new shoes." There are many silly children nowadays who cry,

"LOOK, HOW PERFECT I AM!"

Dear child, it will be better for you to be seen and not heard. When you bear witness to your own enjoyment of the rest of faith, let it be your purpose, first to glorify God, who has given you this rest, and next, that you may convince others that such a rest is possible. How can we hope to convince others that there is the rest of faith, unless we enjoy it ourselves?

Brethren, if you can say as much as this—"By believing, I have entered into rest," be thankful; for this privilege is a gift of love. It is a wonderful instance of sovereign grace that such unworthy ones as we are should enter into God's rest. But if you cannot say it, do not despair. Make it a point to question with yourself, "Why cannot I thus speak? Why have I not entered into rest? Is it because I have not believed?" Perhaps some fault of character may prevent you from enjoying perfect rest. See where that flaw is. Are you living in any sin? If so the sun may have risen, but if there is a bandage over your eyes, you will still be in the dark. Get rid of

that which blinds the eye. Or, are you trusting yourself as well as trusting in Christ? Are you relying on your experience? Then do not wonder if you miss the rest of faith. Get rid of all that spoils the simplicity of your faith. Come to the Lord anew this morning. Possibly you are sickly in body, and this may cause you discomfort, for which you cannot otherwise account. Never mind, you may come just as you are, with all your sickness, weakness, or family trouble, and you may now rest in the Lord. Tell out your grief to Jesus, and He will breathe on you, and say, "Peace be unto you." We ought to be at rest: we err when we are not.

"Alas!" cries one, "I wish I had the rest you speak of, but I cannot find it, though I study much and work hard." Hearken to

A PARABLE:

A little bird of the air found itself in a church. It was anxious to find its way into the open air, and so it flew aloft among the great timbers of the roof, where it was half buried, and almost blinded, by the dust which lay thick upon the beams. There were no seeds, no fruits, nor waters in that dry and thirsty height. It then made a dash at a window, glorious with many colors; but it found no way of escape. It tried again and again, and at last dropped, stunned, upon the pavement of the aisle. When it recovered itself a little, it did not again fly aloft; but seeing the door open upon the level of the floor, it joyfully flew through it into the open country. You are that bird. Your pride makes you deal with high things up there

in the roof. Among the lofty mysteries you are blinding yourself: there is no escape for you there, nor rest, nor even life. You seek a way through the glory of your own painted righteousness; but this will be death to you, if you persevere. Drop down upon the floor of honest confession and lowly penitence. Come to the ground by self-humiliation. When you get lower ideas of yourself you will see just before you the open door, Christ Jesus. As soon as you see Him, use the wings of a simple faith, and you are at liberty, and no more a captive doomed to die. May God bring you down, that He may exalt you in due time, for Christ's sake! Amen.

XVIII.

PRECEPTS, PROMISES, AND PLEAS.

"TEXT—"*Incline your ear, and come unto Me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.*" *Isa. 55 : 3.*

A BROAD INVITATION.—OBJECTIONS MET.—I. TWO SAVING PRECEPTS.—INCLINED EARS.—LISTENING AND CONSIDERING.—THE PEOPLE IN LUCKNOW LISTENING FOR THE BAGPIPES.—COMING ENJOINED.—HOW TO COME.—II. TWO SAVING PROMISES.—LIFE AND COVENANT.—WHAT DAVID'S MERCIES ARE.—MERCIES TO A MAN OF MANY FAULTS.—III. THE SAVING PLEAS.—PERSONAL.—URGENT.—MAGNANIMOUS.—POWERFUL.—EFFECTIVE.

THIS very memorable chapter may be called God's own Gospel-sermon. In reading it we forget Isaiah, and only remember Jehovah. He speaketh not here by the prophet, but in the first person. God Himself saith, "Incline your ear, and come unto Me." Now we value every single word of Holy Writ, but especially those words which come direct from the mouth of God Himself; not so much spoken *for* Him as *by* Him. Take heed that ye turn not away from Him that speaketh from heaven. These are not my words, but the words of the living God; it is not I that invite your attention to myself; but your Maker, your God, saith to you, "Incline your ear, and come unto *Me*:

hear, and your soul shall live; and *I* will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."

From the very beginning, this chapter is a loving pleading with sinners: it is a lifting of stumbling-blocks, and a

CLEARING AWAY OBJECTIONS.

Perhaps some one laments thus: "Who am I, that I should come to God? I am a poor, penniless sinner." The Lord forestalls the lament by saying, "He that hath no money, come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." If you have no merit, if you have no claims, still come. Free grace sounds its golden harp, and mercy sings to it these words, "Without money and without price."

If you stand back because you look upon your past life with sorrow, and you say, "Alas, my God, I have wasted much time in another service!" He tells you that He knows your past folly, and He calls you to cease from it, saying, "Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not?" He bids you now receive the substantial gifts of His grace; for these will satisfy the soul.

If there are any who feel timorous in the presence of such astonishing grace, and are ready to cry, "Lord, we cannot think that Thou wouldest give so great a salvation to us, for we deserve destruction and wrath," see how He meets that doubt by the fourth verse. The highest proof of God's love to men is this, "God

so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." He points to His dear Son, and says, "Behold, I have given Him! In the manger, behold, I have given Him; on the cross, in the sepulcher, in His resurrection, in His enthronement, behold, I have given Him!" What further proof of divine love do you require?

Still, there may be some who say, "We feel ourselves to be strengthless and incapable." The gracious Lord meets you there by laying upon you no heavy yoke; the precepts which He puts before you are simple and easy. He has given you ears, and He bids you use them, saying, "Incline your ear and come unto Me; hear, and your soul shall live."

I. Here are

TWO SAVING PRECEPTS,

which are pressed upon you at this time; for the Holy Spirit saith in all His commands, "To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." These precepts are of simple character. The first is, "Incline your ear." This is placed in another form. "Hearken diligently unto Me; hear, and you shall live." You have ears to hear with, therefore hear. Some of you would hear fast enough if the faintest jingle of a guinea should invite you to gain it. Oh that you would now hear the voice of God! What does it mean—this "Incline your ear"? It means, Consider, and think upon eternal things. It is the fault and folly of worldlings that they reckon eternal things to be second-rate and unworthy of their immediate thought. The soul-winner has to think of all sorts of

ways by which to draw men's attention to that which is

THEIR CHIEF BLESSING.

They are taken up wholly with their farm and their merchandise; any petty piece of news in the daily paper will win their thought and excite their talk; but this event which nearly concerns them is forgotten. For passing pleasure they have ears enough; but when we speak of heaven and hell they will not hear, charm we never so wisely. May the God of all grace this morning arrest the careless one, and constrain him to incline his ear!

But when you read, "Incline your ear," it means, Think about divine matters as God sets them before you. In these days those who judge themselves to be wise disdain to be taught by the revelation of God, but they elect to follow the conjectures of their own minds. They will not follow the Bible, but their own brains, such as they are. They endeavor to make for themselves a chart of a sea they have never sailed over. God has spoken, we need not conjecture: God hath revealed it. Would you be wise? This Book is inspired by Him; bend your powers towards this infallible record.

HOW TO HEARKEN.

Furthermore, remark that this attention to eternal things, this hearkening to what God the Lord will speak, must be hearty, honest, continual, earnest, and believing. "Incline your ear," as men do when they reach forward to catch every syllable, fearful lest they shall miss the meaning. "Hearken diligently." Not

as a man does who hears and forgets. Hearken as they did who were *pent up in Lucknow*, and longed for deliverance. How the Scotch woman rejoiced when she heard, or thought she heard, the sound of the Highlanders' bagpipes in the distance! Ah me! the bare hope of rescue from ferocious foes made them very quick of hearing. Beloved, give the Gospel your best hearing. Hearken diligently; be attent and intent. When your mind has been attentive during the discourse, let it be retentive afterwards. Try to catch God's meaning in His Word, and see what Christ would show to you.

The second precept grows out of the first: "Incline your ear, and come unto Me." This is to be the outcome of your inclining your ear.

"HOW CAN I COME TO GOD?"

saith one. Come to Him at least by thinking much of Him. At present God is not in all your thoughts. Some of you are busy just now with sight-seeing, but you seek not a sight of God; should it be so? Others of you are busy in money-making; you go out to business early, and come home late, and all those hours you are as little mindful of heaven as if there were no God at all. We have not much doctrinal atheism abroad, but we are drenched with practical atheism. The nations forget God. The Lord bids you turn your face Godward, and seek after Him. Consider eternity, and how you will spend it, and what it must be for you if you pass into it without God.

When you have come to Him in thought, then

come by your desires. The son in the far-off country began to return to his father's house, where there was bread enough and to spare, before he had put a foot on the ground to go hither; his heart was on the road before his feet. If you feel as if you could not come to God anyhow else, come by desire at least; desire to be reconciled to God, long to become His child, to taste of His love. This is a true coming.

Come so God by confession of sin. You have lived hitherto without Him; confess that neglect. You have thought that repentance and faith might safely be put off to a more convenient season, and thus you have given your God a contemptuous putting-off. Confess the wrong you have done in this. You have violated the law, for you have not loved the Lord "with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind." Besides this, you have broken every command. Thus have you insulted your Maker; yet come to Him with filial sorrow, and say, "Father, I have sinned."

Come to Cod in humble, believing prayer; ask Him to save you, and believe that He that asketh, receiveth. What! Will you not do that? He that will not ask when the blessing is to be had for the asking, how can I excuse him, how can I pity him, if he shall perish of want? Come to the Lord by prayer, and let it not be said, "Ye have not, because ye ask not." These are the two precepts—*hear and come.*

II. To encourage you in this, I come to my second head, which deals with

TWO SAVING PROMISES.

Here are two promises corresponding to the two precepts. You are bidden, in the first precept, to hearken, and incline your ear, and the promise given is this: "Your soul shall live." What! Live through hearing? Yes, live as the result of hearing; for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." If any man would give himself diligently to the study of the revelation of God, to the searching of the Word of God, and to the hearing of loving, earnest, truthful, spiritual preaching, he would not fail to find life for his soul.

There is such a power about the Word of God that when it comes into contact with the heart which is seeking eternal life it breathes eternal life into it. I will try to sketch the manner of its operation. The man is an earnest hearer, and he says to himself, "How I wish I could meet with the salvation of God!" While listening he feels a tenderness stealing over him; perhaps a tear trickles down his cheek. He gets absorbed in the truth to which he listens, and becomes serious, anxious, and impressible. There will follow upon this feeling a measure of hope in the word. At the first it will be as a mere spark. By and by hope will rouse the soul to pleading. You, who first of all heard the Word carelessly, then heard it attentively, feelingly, and hopefully, will commence to pray that it may be fulfilled to you. I think I hear you crying, "O God, bless Thy Word to me! I am come to

A TURNING-POINT,

Lord, lead me in the right way. Oh, that Thou

wouldest quicken me to run therein!" This prayer will continue to rise within the heart, and will never cease till it is heard, and the soul is made to live unto God. Before you know it, you will find yourself trusting in the great sacrifice for sin. I do not know the manner in which faith is created by the Spirit in the human mind. In many it comes very gradually. Who can tell when the first light of the morning broke over this city? They that were wearily watching by the sick saw a gray light glide over the sky; but the sun was not yet risen. Then the light becomes clearer, and yet more clear; but if there were clouds in the east, even the watchers could not tell exactly when the sun was above the horizon, and the day had really dawned. The light came by degrees, but it came in truth.

With that little faith will come gleams of joy; or if the faith be stronger, a full day will burst in upon the soul, lighting up the whole nature with heavenly brightness. Oh that the Lord would give you joy and peace through believing at this very moment! I pray it may be so! I am glad that you are hearing the Word. "Hear, and your soul shall live."

Now consider the second promise, which is something very wonderful: "I will make an everlasting covenant with you." This joins on to the second precept—"Come unto Me." The soul cries, "Lord, if I were to come, wouldest Thou receive me?" "Receive you!" saith the Lord, "I would enter into a covenant with you." If you come to God, simple as that coming seems, it shall involve infinite results; for the

Lord will do for you exceeding abundantly above what you seek or even think. Listen to this promise, you that are willing to hear God's Word; and pray the Lord to fulfil it to you.

God is ready to enter into

A BINDING CONTRACT

with you. Do you inquire into the tenor of that contract? Well, I cannot tell you all about it this morning, for time would fail me; but it runs somewhat in this fashion: "I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more forever. A new heart also will I give you, and a right spirit will I put within you. I will take the stony heart out of your flesh, and give you a heart of flesh. The mountains shall depart, and the hills shall be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee."

You see, we liken what He gives to the sinner to what He did to David. The aged David lies dying; his strength is gone, he is a worn-out man, he will soon be in eternity. It is interesting to watch him. Tears are in his eyes as he thinks of Absalom, and the rest of his wayward family, and he exclaims, "Although my house be not so with God; yet"—blessed "yet"!—"yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure." That is the kind of covenant which God will make with you. The Lord says to you, "I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies

of David." When you come to die, I hope you may not have the faults of David to confess; but I trust you may have his covenant to fall back upon. I am thankful that David was not a perfect man by a long way, because I can now take comfort from his confidence. He was full of infirmities and sins, and yet he could rejoice in the covenant of grace; and I also, with all my faults, may venture to do the same. I, too, can say, "Yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant."

III. Our third work is to urge

THE LORD'S SAVING PLEAS.

These are not to be mine, but the Lord's. I keep to the chapter. The first plea for which I would beg a hearing is, that God Himself speaks to you. It is He that says, "Incline your ear, and come unto Me." Can you realize for a moment the presence of God? Oh that He would make Himself apparent to you! I do not ask for thunder or lightening, to make you feel the terror of His majesty; but may you know of a surety that the Lord is here! Suppose you were to hear a strange, mysterious voice from yonder dome, saying, "Incline your ear, and come unto Me; hear, and your soul shall live," I am afraid that the sole result would be that you would be startled rather than savingly impressed. But, indeed, it is the Lord God Almighty that saith, "Incline your ear, and come unto Me." I beseech you, refuse not Him that speaketh from heaven.

Furthermore, the Lord pleads with you by the fact that your day of mercy is not ended. Read the sixth

verse: "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near." God may be found. What a blessed fact! Hast thou been a drunkard? Yet God may be found. Wert thou last night in evil company? Yet thou art not yet shut up in hell, and the Lord of Love may yet be found. Are you very old, and have you long despised your Saviour? He has not yet closed the gate of mercy; He may be found. Seek Him at once, while the search can be successful. "Call ye upon Him while He is near." God is still within call. He is not far from any of you. Even though you speak not, He will hear the pulsings of your heart. Oh men and women, call upon your God while His ear is inclined toward you!

The Lord very graciously mentions yet another fact, which should lead you to come to Him, namely, that He is ready and willing to forgive the whole of your past offences. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." I do not know what you think of those last words, "abundantly pardon," but to me they are so sweet that I would set the whole orchestra of the Handel Festival to the singing of them. "Abundantly pardon! Abundantly pardon!" You have abundant sin; fatally abundant! But here is abundant pardon. You mourn your abundant hardness of heart! Yes, but abundant pardon

Then comes in the great persuasive of the magnanimity of God. Hear the words: "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts," No man here knows what great things God designs for him.

Did I hear one cry, "I feel so dull and stupid; I cannot come as I could wish"? Very well, come back to that first precept—"Hear, and your soul shall live." "I have long been a hearer," says one. Have you been an earnest attentive hearer? Have you heard the Word of God as sure and infallible truth? Then be a more believing hearer. Expect the Word to bless you. Hear

HOW THE LORD PLEADS

the power of His Gospel: "My Word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in that thing whereunto I sent it." Hearken to God's voice, and let it enter your heart; then it will quicken and save you as surely as the snow and the rain water the earth. Snow does not melt at once, but it turns to water before long, and is then doubly effectual in watering the soil.

The devil tempts you to give up hearing the Gospel. Do not hearken to him. Hear with double diligence; for if he does not want you to hearken, it is because he is afraid of loosing you. Hearken diligently, and believe steadfastly, and before long you shall be as much saturated with the power of grace as the earth is moistened with the snow and

the rain, which fall from heaven, but return not thither. Remember, it is God's Word, and in that fact lies your hope of getting life by it.

Lastly, the Lord persuades men to come to Him by telling them of the joy they will obtain in coming. I know that I am addressing seeking souls who feel miserable and even despairing. "Alas!" cries one, "I shall soon go out of the reach of hope." "No," says the Lord, "you shall go out with joy." "Alas!" you sigh, "I shall be led forth to execution." "Nay," saith the Lord, "you shall be led forth with peace." These are no words of mine! these are the very words of the living God, Hitherto the world has seemed to be as dull as you are; but it shall brighten up. Listen to this promise. Believe it, and you shall find it true. You shall enter upon a new life, and the world shall be a new world to you.

"Ah!" says one, "God will never make much of me." This is

WHAT HE IS GOING TO DO

with you: "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle-tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." That thorny temper of yours shall become gentle and generous. That briery malice shall give place to forgiveness and compassion, Blasphemy shall yield to devotion, vice to holiness, falsehood to truth, and pride to lowliness. That sin of drunkenness, which has been such a thicket of thorns to you and your wife and family, shall give place to sobriety, industry, thrift,

godliness, love to God, and joy in the Holy Spirit. If you hear and live, and come to God, so as to be in covenant with Him, the day will come when you will not know yourself, so great will be the change. May His sweet Spirit gently lead you to Himself! and if it be so, "it shall be to the Lord for a name." He will get a great reputation out of His great grace; even as a doctor wins a name by curing grievous diseases. They will tell it in heaven that you are saved, and throughout eternity angels and principalities in the heavenly places shall see in you a monument of grace, a trophy of all-conquering love.

XIX.

AN IMPIOUS TAUNT.

TEXT—"*He trusted in God: let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him; for He said, I am the Son of God.*" *Matt. 37 : 43.*

THE SIN BEARER TAUNTED. — I. THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF HIS FAITH.—THE MOCKERS SAID HE TRUSTED IN GOD.—HOW THEY KNEW. — BY HIS LIFE. — A PERSONAL FAITH. — MAKES MEN STRONG. — THE MENTONESE AND THE PRINCE OF MONACO. — II. THE TEST THE ESSENCE OF THE TAUNT.—LOGICAL. — AN ITEM FOR THE DEVIL'S GAZETTE.—A BRAVE PATIENT IN GUY'S HOSPITAL.— ALL FAITH MUST BE TRIED. — III. THE ANSWER. — GOD DOES DELIVER.—BY SUSTAINING.—IN HIS OWN WAY.

IT is very painful to the heart to picture our blessed Master in His death-agonies, surrounded by a ribald multitude, who watched Him and mocked Him, made sport of His prayer and insulted His faith. Nothing was sacred to them: they invaded the Holy of Holies of His confidence in God, and taunted Him concerning that faith in Jehovah which they were compelled to admit. Beloved, the treatment of our Lord Jesus Christ by men is the clearest proof of total depravity which can possibly be required or discovered. Those must be stony hearts indeed which can laugh at a dying Saviour, and

MOCK EVEN AT HIS FAITH

in God! Compassion would seem to have deserted humanity, while malice sat supreme on the throne.

Painful as the picture is, it will do you good to paint it. You will need neither canvas nor brush nor palette nor colors. Let your thoughts draw the outline, and your love fill in the detail; I shall not complain if imagination heightens the coloring. The Son of God, whom angels adore with veiled faces, is pointed at with scornful fingers by men who thrust out the tongue and mockingly exclaim, "He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him."

While thus we see our Lord in His sorrow and His shame as our substitute, we must not forget that He also is there as our representative. In Him we see what we have in our measure to endure. "As He is, so are we also in this world." We also must be crucified to the world, and we may look for somewhat of those tests of faith and taunts of derision which go with such a crucifixion. "Marvel not if the world hate you." You, too, must suffer without the gate. Not for the world's redemption, but for the accomplishment of divine purposes in you, and through you to the sons of men, you must be made to know the cross and its shame.

I. First, then, my beloved brethren, you who know the Lord by faith, and live by trusting in Him, let me invite you to observe

THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT

which these mockers made of our Lord's faith: "He trusted in God." Yet the Saviour did not wear any peculiar garb or token by which He let men know that He trusted in God. He was not a recluse,

neither did He join some little knot of separatists, who boasted their peculiar trust in Jehovah. Although our Saviour was separate from sinners, yet He was eminently a man among men, and He went in and out among the multitude as one of themselves. His one peculiarity was that "He trusted in God." This was the one thing which distinguished Him among men—"He trusted in God," and He lived such a life as naturally grows out of faith in the Eternal Lord. This peculiarity had been visible even to that ungodly multitude who least of all cared to perceive a spiritual point of character. Was ever any other upon a cross thus saluted by the mob who watched His execution? Had these scorners ever mocked any one before for such a matter as this? I trow not. Yet faith had been so manifest in our Lord's daily life that the crowd cried, "He trusted in God."

How did they know? I suppose they could not help seeing that He made much of God in His teaching, in His life, and in His miracles. Whenever Jesus spoke it was always godly talk; and if it was not always distinctly about God, it was always about things that related to God, that came from God, that led to God, that magnified God. A man may be fairly judged by that which he makes most of. The ruling passion is a fair gauge of the heart. What a soul-ruler faith is! It sways the man as the rudder guides the ship. When a man once gets to live by faith in God, it tinctures his thoughts, it masters his purposes, it flavors his words, it puts a tone into his actions, and it comes out in everything by ways and means most

natural and unconstrained, till men perceive that they have to do with a man who makes much of God. To our Lord Jesus, God was all in all; and when you come to estimate God as He did, then the most careless onlooker will soon begin to say of you, "He trusted in God."

In addition to observing that Jesus made much of God, men came to note that He was a trusting man, and not self-confident. Certain persons are very proud because they are

SELF-MADE MEN.

I will do them credit to admit that they heartily worship their maker. Self made them, and they worship self. We have among us individuals who are self-sufficient, and almost all-sufficient; they sneer at those who do not succeed, for *they* can succeed anywhere at anything. A vat of sufficiency ferments within their ribs! There was nothing of that sort of thing in our Lord. The words that He spake He spake not of Himself, and the great deeds that He did He never boasted of, but said, "The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works." He was a truster in God, not a boaster in self.

It is evident that the Lord Jesus trusted in God openly, since even yonder gibing crowd proclaimed it. Some good people try to exercise faith on the sly: they practice it in snug corners, and in lonely hours, but they are afraid to say much before others, for fear their faith should not see the promise fulfilled. They dare not say, with David, "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof and

be glad." This secrecy robs God of His honor. Brethren, we do not glorify our God as He ought to be glorified. Let us trust in Him, and own it. Oh, I want you so to live that those who dislike you most may, nevertheless, know that you do trust in God! When you come to die, may your dear children say of you, "Our dear mother did trust in the Lord!" May that boy, who has gone farthest away from Christ, and grieved your heart the most, nevertheless say in his heart, "There may be hypocrites in the world, but my dear father does truly trust in God!" Oh, that our faith may be known unmistakably!

FAITH MUST BEGIN AT HOME.

Of what use were the longest arm if it were not fixed to the man himself at the shoulder? If you have no faith about yourself, what faith can you have about others? "He trusted in the Lord that He would deliver Him." Come, beloved, have you such a faith in the living God? Do you trust in God through Christ Jesus that He will save you? Yes, you poor, unworthy one, the Lord will deliver you if you trust Him. Yes, poor woman, or unknown man, the Lord can help you in your present trouble, and in every other, and He will do so if you trust Him to that end. May the Holy Spirit lead you to first trust the Lord Jesus for the pardon of sin, and then to trust for all things.

Certainly, dear friends, it is extremely *comfortable* to trust in God. I find it so and therefore speak. To roll your burden upon the Lord, since He will sustain you, is a blessed way of being quit of care. We know

Him to be faithful, and as powerful as He is faithful; and our dependence upon Him is the solid foundation of a profound peace. If you trust in men—the best of men—you are likely to be lowered by your trust. We are apt to cringe before those who patronize us. If your prosperity depends upon a person's smile, you are tempted to pay homage even when it is undeserved. The old saying mentions a certain person as "knowing on which side his bread is buttered." Thousands are practically degraded by trusting in men. But when our reliance is upon the living God, we are raised by it, and elevated both morally and spiritually.

This confidence in God makes men *strong*. I should advise the enemy not to oppose the man who trusts in God. In the long run he will be beaten, as Haman found it with Mordecai. He had been warned of this: "If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him." Contend not with a man who has God at his back. Years ago the Mentonese desired to break away from the dominion of the Prince of Monaco. They therefore drove out his agent. The prince came with his army—not a great one, it is true, but still formidable to the Mentonese. I know not what the high and mighty princeling was not going to do; but the news came that the King of Sardinia was coming up in the rear to help the Mentonese, and, therefore, his lordship of Monaco very prudently retired to his own rock. When a believer stands out against evil, he may be sure that the Lord will not be far away.

II. Secondly, I want you to follow me briefly in considering the test which is

THE ESSENCE OF THE TAUNT

which was hurled by the mockers against our Lord—"Let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him." Such a test will come to all believers. It may come as a taunt from enemies; it will certainly come as a trial of your faith. The arch-enemy will assuredly hiss out, "Let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him."

This taunt has about it the appearance of being very logical, and indeed in a measure so it is. If God has promised to deliver us, and we have openly professed to believe the promise, it is only natural that others should say, "Let us see whether He does deliver him. This man believes that the Lord will help him; and He must help him, or else the man's faith is a delusion." This is the sort of test to which we ourselves would have put others before our conversion, and we cannot object to be proved in the same manner ourselves. Perhaps we incline to run away from the ordeal, but this very shrinking should be a solemn call to us to question the genuineness of that faith which we are afraid to test. "He trusted on the Lord," says the enemy, "that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him"; and surely, however malicious the design, there is no escaping from the logic of the challenge.

The taunt is specially pointed and personal. It is put thus: "*He* trusted on the Lord that He would deliver *Him:* let Him deliver *Him*"; "Do not come

to us with your fiddle-faddle about God's helping all His chosen. Here is a man who is one of His people; will He help *him?* Do not talk to us big things about Jehovah at the Red Sea, or in the Desert of Sinai, or God helping His people in past ages. Here is a living man before us who trusted in God that He would deliver him: let Him deliver *him* now." You know how Satan will pick out one of the most afflicted, and pointing his fingers at him will cry, "Let Him deliver HIM." Brethren, the test is fair. God will be

TRUE TO EVERY BELIEVER.

If any one child of God could be lost, it would be quite enough to enable the devil to spoil all the glory of God forever. If one promise of God to one of His people should fail, that one failure would suffice to mar the veracity of the Lord to all eternity: they would publish it in the *Diabolical Gazette*, and in every street of Tophet they would howl it out, "God has failed. God has broken His promise. God has ceased to be faithful to His people." It would then be a horrible reproach—"He trusted in God to deliver him, but He did not deliver him."

Much emphasis lies in its being in the present tense: "He trusted in God that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him *now.*" I see Thee, O Lord Jesus; Thou art not now in the wilderness, where the fiend is saying, "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." No. Thou art nailed to a tree; Thine enemies have hemmed Thee in. The legionaries of Rome are at the foot of the cross, the

Scribes and Pharisees and raging Jews compass Thee about. There is no escape from death for Thee! Hence their cry: "Let Him deliver Him *now*." Ah, brothers and sisters! this is how Satan assails us, using our present and pressing tribulations as the barbs of his arrows. Yet here also there is reason and logic in the challenge.

I told you a story the other day of *the brother in Guy's Hospital* to whom the doctors said that he must undergo an operation which was extremely dangerous. They gave him a week to consider whether he would submit to it. He was troubled for his young wife and children, and for his work for the Lord. A friend left a bunch of flowers for him, with this verse as its motto, "He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now." "Yes," he thought, "*now*." In prayer he cast himself upon the Lord, and felt in his heart, "Come on, doctors, I am ready for you!" When the next morning came, he refused to take chloroform, for he desired to go to heaven in his senses. He bore the operation manfully, and he is yet alive. "He trusted on the Lord that He would deliverh im" then and there, and the Lord did so.

A Christian man may be beaten in business, he may fail to meet all demands, and then Satan yells, "Let Him deliver him *now*." The poor man has been out of work for two or three months, tramping the streets of London until he has worn out his boots; he has been brought to his last penny. I think I hear the laugh of the Prince of Darkness as he cries, "Let Him deliver him *now*." Or else the believer is very ill in

body, and low in spirit, and then Satan howls, "Let Him deliver him *now*." Some of us have been

IN VERY TRYING POSITIONS.

We were moved with indignation because of deadly error, and we spoke plainly, but men refused to hear. Those we relied upon deserted us; good men sought their own ease and would not march with us, and we had to bear testimony for despised truth alone, until we were ourselves despised. Then the adversary shouted, "Let Him deliver him *now*." Be it so! We do not refuse the test. Our God whom we serve will deliver us. We will not bow down to modern thought nor worship the image which human wisdom has set up. Our God is God both of hills and of valleys. He will not fail His servants, albeit that for awhile He forbears that He may try their faith. We dare accept the test, and say, "Let Him deliver us *now*."

Beloved friends, we need not be afraid of this taunt if it is brought by adversaries; for, after all, the test will come to us apart from any malice, for *it is inevitable*. Brethren, we have not a tithe of the faith we think we have. But whether or not, all our

FAITH MUST BE TESTED.

God builds no ships but what He sends to sea. In living, in losing, in working, in weeping, in suffering, or in striving, God will find a fitting crucible for every single grain of the precious faith which He has given us.

Yes, the test will come again and again. May the gibes of adversaries only make us ready for the sterner ordeals of the judgment to come! O my dear friends,

examine your religion. You have a great deal of it, some of you; but what of its quality? Can your religion stand the test of poverty, and scandal, and scorn? Can it stand the test of scientific sarcasm and learned contempt? Will your religion stand the test of long sickness of body, and depression of spirit caused by weakness? What are you doing amid the common trials of life? What will you do in the swellings of Jordan? Examine well your faith, since all hangs there. Some of us who have lain for weeks together, peering through the thin veil which parts us from the unseen, have been made to feel that nothing will suffice us but a promise which will answer the taunt, "Let Him deliver us *now*."

III. I shall finish, in the third place, dear friends, by noticing

THE ANSWER

to the test. God does deliver those who trust in Him. God's interposition for the faithful is not a dream, but a substantial reality. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth Him out of them all." All history proves the faithfulness of God. Those who trust God have been in all sorts of troubles; but they have always been delivered. They have been bereaved. What a horrible bereavement was that which fell to the lot of Aaron, when his two sons were struck dead for their profanity in the presence of God! "And Aaron held his peace!" What grace was there! Thus will the Lord sustain you also, should He take away the desire of your eyes with a stroke. Grave after grave has the good man

visited, till it seemed that his whole race was buried, yet his heart has not been broken; but he has bowed his soul before the will of the ever-blessed One. Thus has the Lord delivered His afflicted one by sustaining him. In other ways the bush has burned, and yet has not been consumed.

But God's ways of deliverance are His own. He does not deliver according to the translation put upon "deliverance" by the ribald throng. He does not deliver according to the interpretation put upon "deliverance" by our shrinking flesh and blood. He delivers, but it is in His own way. Let me remark that, *if God delivers you and me in the same way as He delivered His own Son, we can have no cause of complaint.*

WHAT KIND OF A DELIVERANCE

was that? Did the Father tear up the cross from the earth? Did He proceed to draw out the nails from the sacred hands and feet of His dear Son? Did He set Him down upon that "green hill far away, beyond the city wall," and place in His hand a sword of fire with which to smite His adversaries? Did He bid the earth open and swallow up all His foes? No; nothing of the kind. Jehovah did not interpose to spare His Son a single pang, but He let Him die, He let Him be taken as a dead man down from the cross and laid in a tomb. Jesus went through with His suffering to the bitter end. O brothers and sisters, this may be God's way of delivering us. We have trusted in God that He would deliver us; and His rendering of His promise is, that He will enable us

to go through with it; we shall suffer to the last, and triumph in so doing.

Anyhow, He will deliver His chosen: the taunt of the adversary shall not cause our God to forget or forego His people. I know that the Lord will no more fail me than any other of His servants. He will not leave a faithful witness to His adversaries. "I know that my Avenger liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." Is this also your confidence? Then do not sit down in sorrow, and act as though you despaired. Quit yourselves like men. Be strong, fear not.

There are times when we may use this text to our comfort. "Let Him deliver Him now," saith the text, "if He will have Him." You, dear friends, who have never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ before, how I wish you could try Him now! You feel this morning full of sin, and full of need. Come, then, and trust the Saviour *now*. See whether He will not save you *now*. "Oh," you say, "I am in such an unfit state; I am in all the deshabille of my carelessness and godlessness." Come along, man, come along, just as you are. Tarry not for improvement or arrangement, for both of these Jesus will give you; come and put your trust in the great Sacrifice for sin, and He will deliver you—deliver you *now*. Lord, save the sinner, *now!*

It may be that some of us are in trouble about the church and the faith. We have defended God's truth as well as we could, and spoken out against deadly error; but craft and numbers have been against us, and at present things seem to have gone wrong. If we have not spoken in God's name we are content to go back to the dust from whence we sprang; but if we have spoken God's truth, we defy the whole confederacy to prevail against it. Let us drown the taunts of the adversary with our shouts of Hallelujah! The Lord shall reign for ever and ever. Hallelujah. Amen!

XX.

THE CURSE AND THE CURSE-BEARER.

TEXT—"*For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse . . . . Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. Galatians 3 : 10–14.*

THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO ABRAHAM.—CAME TO HIM BY FAITH.—I. THE BLESSING NOT ATTAINABLE BY WORKS OF THE LAW.—ALL MEN UNDER THE LAW BY NATURE.—NO EXEMPTION ON ACCOUNT OF RANK.—OR GENERAL OBEDIENCE.—OR CHURCH ATTENDANCE.—II. THE BLESSING FOR THOSE WHO ARE OF FAITH.—REDEEMED AND CHANGED.—RECEIVE THE BLESSINGS OF ABRAHAM.—JUSTIFICATION.—THE PROMISE.—PRACTICAL ADVISE.—AN UNFASHIONABLE PREACHER.

THE apostle tells us, in the eighth verse, that the Gospel was preached to Abraham. Very briefly, very tersely, but very fully, was the Gospel proclaimed to him in these words, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." The true Gospel is no new thing, it is as old as the hills. It was heard in Eden ere man was driven from the garden, and it has since been repeated in sundry ways and in divers places even to this day. Oh that its very antiquity would lead men to venerate it, and then to listen to its voice! It is "Gospel," or good news—the best of news for fallen men. Oh that they would receive it with gladness!

FAITH THE ONLY CHANNEL.

The Gospel blessing which was thus preached to Abraham, and to his seed, came to him by faith. He

was justified by his faith, as it is written, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." The blessing, which is the soul of Abraham's Gospel, must come to us in the same way as it did to him, namely, by faith; and if we expect to find it in any other way, we shall be grievously mistaken. There were some in Paul's day who were "of the works of the law," and expected to obtain the blessing through their own doings; but they could not find it. We have many around us who are practically looking for Gospel blessings upon legal principles. The object of our sermon is to show them their certainty of failure; and, at the same time, to make clear that way of faith, by which the curse is rolled away and the blessing comes to the chosen seed.

I. Let us learn at the outset, that blessedness comes not to those who are of the works of the law. First, observe *the fact*, as the apostle states it very positively: "As many as are of the works of the law are

UNDER THE CURSE."

We are all "of the works of the law" by nature, because it is our bounden duty, as creatures, to keep the law of our Creator. He is our benefactor, our King, our Lord and God, and He has claims upon us which we ought not to disown. He has set forth those claims in the law of the Ten Commandments, and these are binding upon all of us without exception. Because we have disobeyed that law, and denied to God His just claims, our violation of the law has brought us under its penalty, which is described as "the

curse." No man has always kept all the law, and consequently every man that is of the works of the law has come under the curse, and must remain under it unless ransomed in the one appointed fashion. If you read those Ten Commandments through, as you should do very carefully, you will have to pause at each one, and say, with solemn truthfulness, "I have broken this."

Especially will this be the case if you remember the truth that the law is spiritual, and deals with thoughts, desires, imaginations, motives,—yea, with your nature itself. Surely you will have to cry "Guilty! guilty!" every way, and "guilty" every day. This being the case, you are under the curse. You may have been moral, and outwardly commendable; but the heart and intent are what the Lord looks at; and because you have not loved the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength, and have not loved your neighbor as yourself, you have come short of the demands of His righteous law, and you are under the curse.

I am not talking now of thieves and murderers, and such like; I am speaking of as many as are of the works of the law, and especially of those who believe that they are keeping the law, and are looking for their salvation by their obedience. Those who think that they are not to be numbered with the guilty, and need not to be saved by grace, these are of the works of the law by their own choice, and they are under the curse. If you come before God in your own self-

righteousness, you are by that very act and deed proven to be under the curse.

That you may no longer abide in

FALSE SECURITY,

I pray you for a few moments weigh those words, "under the curse." I do not feel as if I could expand them or expound them; but I must simply repeat them: "under the curse!" The Lord make those words to pierce your souls! This is not my language, remember; it is not even the word of the apostle Paul as a man; for he speaketh by inspiration when he saith, "As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." It is a curse that was pronounced of old by the authority of the Lord, and confirmed by the Amens of assembled Israel; it is, in fact, the essence of all those curses which of old were declared on Mount Ebal, the rolling thunder of threatened wrath. Dare you sleep to-night under the curse? Will you wake to-morrow and go forth to your business under the curse? Can you sport and laugh and frolic under the curse? God grant we may be sufficiently sensible to be filled with anguish at the sound of these dreadful words—"under the curse!"

The apostle goes on to give a Scriptural confirmation of this fact. He says, "For it is written." He is writing a part of the New Testament under inspiration of the Holy Spirit; but he turns back to the Old, and gives authority to his writing, by showing that it always was the mind of the Spirit, "for it is written." If anything be written by the pen of inspiration, it is true, and we accept it as infallible. I hope you are

not among those who trifle with the inspiration of any part of Holy Writ; for if so this text has no power with you. "It is written" is a thing of omnipotent authority with many of us. "It is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." This is the summary of the whole passage in the twenty-seventh chapter of Deuteronomy, and also of the fifteenth verse of the eighth chapter.

Attend to each word of the passage. There is

NO EXEMPTION OF PERSONS.

"Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law." The sentence is sweeping; there are no exceptions to its killing force. You may have kept the law in many points, but if you have broken it in one, you are under its curse. If you want to send a message by the telegraph wire, it may be perfectly sound for one hundred miles, but if it is only broken in one inch, nay, if it is simply cut across, you cannot send the message by it. No blessing can come to a man by the law unless the law has been perfectly kept! but one single infraction of the law involves the curse.

Observe that there is no limit of time. It says, "continueth not." What if a man should have kept the law, in his own judgment, for many years—his service is not over. Men join our army for a certain number of years, and then they are discharged; but a man is under the law as long as he lives; neither can he escape from under its yoke by the mere lapse of time. And so, if we had accomplished obedience

for twenty years, yet still, if in the next year we broke the law, we should come under its curse. A thief is not excused because he was heretofore honest, nor a murderer because aforetime he had not shed blood. He that "continueth not" comes under the lash. My conscience clearly sees the utter impossibility of my ever obtaining justification by the works of the law. If up till now I had never sinned, which, alas! is very, very far from being the case, yet I should still stand in jeopardy every hour; for, being tempted, I should yet fall and perish, if my footing were that of the law. There is no

INDULGENCE AS TO CERTAIN SINS.

"Cursed is every one that continueth not in *all* things." What a range these words have! Yet they do not so much concern ceremonial things as the moral conduct of daily life. If you will turn to Deuteronomy 27, from which Paul is quoting, you will find that the works which are mentioned in detail as bringing the curse are not works of worship and oblation and ritual, but of morality or immorality; works which concern the moral law. We must continue in the keeping of the Ten Commandments, and abide in the spirit of them in "all things;" or, if not, it is utterly impossible that the law can ever save us: all it can do is to put us under its curse.

How cutting is the sentence, "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them"! It is an awful passage. It seems to me to shut up the gate of hope by works, yea, to nail it up. I bless God it does fasten

this door effectually; for if there seemed to be half a chance of getting through it, we should find

MEN STILL STRUGGLING

for entrance. Salvation by self is man's darling hope: salvation by doings, feelings, or something or other of their own, is the favorite delusion of sinners. We may bless God that He has rolled a great stone at the mouth of the grave of legal hope. He has dashed in pieces as with a rod of iron the earthen vessel which held the treasures of our conceit. "By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

My dear hearers, let us deal faithfully and personally with the solemn truth now before us. I pray that everyone may examine himself to see whether he is of the works of the law. Are we legal in our feelings? Are we relying upon self and its doings? Does any one among us feel that there is not in London a more deserving person than himself? Because he is a good church or chapel goer, does he think himself accepted of the Lord? Because of confirmation or baptism or attendance on the sacrament, does he hope to be saved? Because of his decent and respectable life, does he reckon himself just? If such be the hope of any one of you, you are confessedly "of the works of the law," and it is not my word, but the Word of the Lord, that you are under the curse. Think of this, you who are so very good, so free from fault! There is nothing for you but the curse.

II. Secondly, this blessedness comes to those who are of faith, even to those who look for salvation to the Lord Jesus, in whom God declares Himself to be

just, and the justifier of him that believeth. On this point I shall run on much the same lines as under the first division of the subject. Here we have

A BLESSED FACT:

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law." If the former truth, that we are under the curse, should make us sit uneasily, this blessed doctrine should make us dance for joy. The ransom is paid: we are free. "Christ hath redeemed *us;*" that is, so many as believe in Him. He hath "redeemed us from the curse of the law;" "He hath bought us out from under the curse." Our deliverance from the curse is by a process similar to that by which slaves are set free, namely, by being bought with a price.

We are not merely delivered from the curse by a moral change in us, but by a redemptive work for us. Christ was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by His blood. A ransomed captive is by the ransom justly freed, and has a right to his freedom which none may question. You that believe in Jesus are freed from the curse of the law, and justly freed from it. The law cannot curse you, though you have broken it, and in your own persons incurred its penalty. Since you are in Christ Jesus, the law has not a word to say against you; the reason we will show you directly, but the fact is so, and therein you should rejoice.

But then the apostle goes on to show the manner of it. The fact is clear; oh, for a grip of it! The manner of our deliverance is this: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a

curse for us." I do not understand language at all unless this means substitution. Christ was made a curse for us; that is to say, in our room and place and stead He bore our sin, and the curse which came of it. The curse of the law, which otherwise must have fallen upon us, fell upon the Anointed of the Lord, who stood sponsor for us. "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all," and then, "it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief." Here is our hope, and here our joy, even in this abyss of woe: "He was made a curse for us."

THE PENAL CONSEQUENCES

of sin were so visited upon the great Substitute that He vindicated the law of God in the highest conceivable manner. Remember those words: "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." These are the echo of that prophetic sentence: "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." "He bare the sin of many." "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." He bare our sin that He might bear them away by the fact of bearing them Himself. This is the central doctrine of the Gospel; and although to-day it is slighted, here I stand, by God's grace, to declare it in plain terms while my tongue can move. I know no other hope for lost men but this—that the justice of God has been vindicated by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is by faith in Him that men are delivered from the curse of the law, because He was made a curse for them.

Notice the consequence of all this: "That

might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ." Our Lord Jesus Christ was made a curse for us that He might deliver us from the curse of the law, and that in consequence we might be blessed. This day there is no curse for the believer; but every blessing awaits him. All who are in Christ, the great seed of Abraham, are blessed with faithful Abraham. What was the blessing of Abraham? It was, first, justification. It was "accounted to him for righteousness." God counts them righteous who believe in Jesus. He not only absolves you from sim, but He justifies you, accounts you as having kept the law. Oh, rejoice in this!

The next blessing to Abraham was the promise. God had given him a great promise of a spiritual inheritance. To us the Holy Spirit is the earnest of that future inheritance; and Christ has so wrought for us "that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Wherever the Spirit of God dwells, the covenant is fulfilled: you have in the Spirit the foretaste of the promised rest, you have the initial stages of the promised perfection, you have the dawn of

THAT PROMISED GLORY.

The Spirit is the earnest of the inheritance till the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory. Beloved, see what has come to you, then, through the substitutionary work of Christ; justification is yours as truly as it was Abraham's, and you are as assuredly justified as Abraham was.

All this, you observe, is by faith: "That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." O dear hearers, I am very sorry for some of you, for you have no faith, and therefore no grace. Why should not my sorrow be turned into joy? May God the Holy Ghost lead you to believe in Christ Jesus to-day! My wonder is that any believe, from one point of view; and then my next wonder is that anybody should not believe. Is it not marvelous that God should give His own dear Son, God like Himself, and that God should thus come among men, and put on human flesh and blood, and that in His wonderfully complex person He should bear the consequences of our sin? Oh that you would look to Jesus by faith! I began by lamenting that we are under the curse; but if you will trust in my Lord, I shall conclude by bidding you rejoice that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse."

I have done when I just say these two or

THREE PRACTICAL WORDS:

Humbly let us own the great evil of sin. What a horrible thing sin must be, that it should compel God to curse His creatures! God is love, but even love curses sin. God is full of pity and compassion; but this very God must curse those who hope to be saved by His law, and yet break that law. Child of God, dost thou ever trifle with sin? Cease from that fatal folly; for God does not trifle with it—He curses it. O man, see what a polluting thing thy sin must be, since there is no removing it save by the blood of the only begotten Son of God! If thou hast ever had

faint views of thine own guilt, cease from them at once. Only by the interposition of God Himself couldst thou be saved from guilt. How great that guilt! Lie low before thy Lord. Confess thy sin with a broken heart. Wonder that thy heart is not more broken than it is, and that thou hast not a greater horror of its tremendous evil.

Next, let me say to you, heartily accept the way of salvation by faith in Christ. I cannot make out why men quarrel with justification by faith as they do now. There is an old proverb which saith, "It is a pity for any man to quarrel with his bread and butter." But to quarrel with the means of your livelihood is nothing in folly compared with cavilling at God's way of salvation. Why do you refuse a method so simple, so just to God, so safe to man? Why do men desire to find fault with it?

I am very old-fashioned, so *they* say; but does their new fashion offer men anything better than the old way? I am not too old to learn; but I am not so young as willingly to go farther and fare worse. I cannot see what there is in the new theology which even pretends to be better than the old. I suppose that eminent divine is eminently superior to me who is so orthodox as to say that our Lord Jesus Christ by His death did something or other, he does not know what, which in some way or other, he does not quite know how, is connected with the reconciliation of man to God. That is rather

A CLOUDY GOSPEL.

I do not think that such a dim statement would cheer

a mouse, much less a broken-hearted, dying sinner. I do not see that his plan, or want of plan, has any glory over that which I declare to you. But he is orthodox: very many of his brethren go far further, and altogether deny the expiatory sacrifice. I cannot pretend to have fellowship with such: they take from me my hope. I was a broken-hearted sinner, crushed under guilt, crying out in despair, and expecting soon to be in hell; and it was only when I learned that the Lord Jesus suffered in my stead that I found peace of conscience. Substitution is still the rock on which I build, and I know of no other on which a man can wisely base his hope for eternity. Comfort in the cross I have never lost, and I am not going to cast away my confidence in it to please the philosophers of the season. The old farmer would not change his horse, "For," said he, "I have not seen a nag that will carry me better than my own." The doctrine of the cross has carried me so far without a stumble, and I hope to enter heaven by its means.

Finally, go and tell other people about your Lord's redemption. The theme will win attention if properly set forth. Let no one within fifty miles of you be without a knowledge of this great redemption by Christ's being made a curse for us. Men try to hide this truth; therefore cause it to shine out everywhere. Vindicate the name of your great Lord by telling everybody that He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. If I could set you all preaching this blessed doctrine, Is hould rejoice indeed. Rest in it, and rejoice in it, and then repeat

it till others also know and believe it. Even now the day begins to brighten up, the murky darkness is abating; I hope our hearts will rejoice in harmony with the day. The Lord send us out into a world delivered from darkness! May we make it brighter by setting before it this great truth! To our glorious Substitute be glory for ever and ever!

XXI.

FOUNDATION WORK.

TEXT—"*And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones and hewed stones to lay the foundation of the house.*" *1 Kings 5 : 17.*

A COMMON MISTAKE IN BUILDING. — THE FOUNDATION THE FIRST CONCERN.—THOUGH IT IS OUT OF SIGHT.—I. GOD'S METHOD. — IN CREATION. — THE FOUNDATION LAID MILLIONS OF YEARS BEFORE ADAM.—THE COAL IN THE CELLAR.—IN PROVIDENCE. — MATHEW ARNOLD'S PERCEPTION OF THE POWER. — IN REDEMPTION.—JESUS THE SURE FOUNDATION. —II. THE BELIEVER'S METHOD.—THE PRIVATE CONFLICT. — ARTESIAN GRACE.—IN THE BUILDING OF A CHURCH. — IN THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL. — A DOG'S SIGNATURE ON A BRICK. — UNGILDED PATCHES ON A WALL. — III. A WISE METHOD. — EVERY BUILDING TO BE TESTED BY FIRE.

SOLOMON began to build the temple at the foundation. You smile, and wonder how he could have begun anywhere else. Ah, dear friends! I wish common-sense ruled people in religion as well as in building temples; for many brethren begin their building at the top: To baptize an unbeliever is laying the top-stone before the foundation. To gather into church fellowship those who are not gathered to Christ, is attempting to pile on the roof before there are any walls. For any of you to make a profession of religion without being born again, is building the third story before there is any basement. How much we have in this world of

HANGING UP HOUSES IN THE AIR!

I mean, making professions without having anything

upon which to base them. Begin with the foundation. The foundation, in his case, had to be carried to a great height, because the area upon which the temple stood was on high above the valley. As there was not space enough on the mount, it was necessary to build up from the depth of the valley scores of feet in perpendicular height, to form a foundation upon which there would be sufficient space for the temple and its surroundings. Portions of the massive masonry which formed the foundation of the enlarged area remain, to be wondered at. Solomon paid especial care to the foundation.

I. First, this is

GOD'S METHOD.

Wherever you turn your eye upon the work of God, it is perfect. It will bear the keenest inspection. You may look at it from a distance with the telescope, or you may search into it with a microscope; but you shall find no imperfection. The Lord's work is perfect, not merely on the surface, but to its centre. If you cut deep, or if you pull it to pieces, dividing atom from atom, you shall see the wisdom of God in the minutest particle.

Observe the work of creation. God took care that even in the material universe there should be a grand foundation for His noble edifice. We have the story of the fitting up of the world, during the seven days, for the habitation of man; but we have not the history of the creation of the earth before that time. To prepare for the seven day's rapid furnishing of the earth for man, millions of years may have elapsed. The

foundation was laid with great care. No limit can be set to the period preceding the making of man, if you only follow the Word of God in Genesis. "In the beginning"—that was a long, long while ago—"God created the heaven and the earth;" and during that

PROCESS OF CREATION

it went through a great many stages; for God was determined that the house in which man should dwell should be thoroughly furnished for him. I cannot conduct you to the foundations of the earth; but I do ask you to go down with me into the cellar. Look at the store of coals laid up in the deep places for us. God would not send His child here in winter-time, and put no coals in the cellar for him; but He took long ages to provide the world with that fuel which is necessary for a thousand useful purposes. God is the Master-builder, and He layeth the foundation well.

The same is true of God's work called Providence. No event happens but He has planned it, and ordained that a multitude of other events should precede or fol low it. The doings of Providence are threaded together like pearls upon a string; there is a relation of this to that, and of that to another. Certain great principles underlie all history. One who had but little spiritual knowledge, yet confessed that "there is a power abroad which makes for righteousness:" he could not help seeing that; and he might have seen more had he opened his eyes. There is in the affairs of man many a touch of God's own hand. History

looks like a tangled skein; but when you and I shall see it disentangled, we shall wonder at the infinite wisdom and kindness and goodness of God.

But we come into clearer light when we look at

THE LORD'S GREATEST WORK

of redemption. You and I are not saved haphazard. It is not as though God had saved us on the spur of the moment, as an afterthought which was not in His first intent. No; redemption plays an essential part in the purposes of the Lord. The foundation of redemption was securely laid in the covenant of grace, of which the Lord Jesus is the foundation. Infinite love, infallible wisdom, immutable faithfulness—all these combined to lay a foundation which can never be moved. Talk of the great stones and costly stones of Solomon's Temple, they are not worthy to be mentioned in the same day as this chief Corner-stone. He is the foundation of God, which standeth sure.

Once more: while illustrating the truth that God's method is to lay a good foundation, I must beg you to think of the application of redemption to the heart of every one of the redeemed in personal salvation. Beloved, when God saved us it was no superficial work; the building of His grace in our souls is no wooden shanty, but a building which hath foundations. When He wrought in you conviction of sin, what an out-digging there was! With some of us the throwing out of the foundation lasted for years; and for myself I began to think there never would be a trace of anything built up in my heart. What

A TRENCH WAS DUG IN MY SOUL!

Out went my supposed merits! *What a heap of rubbish!* Out went my knowledge, my good resolves, and my self-sufficiency! By-and-by, out went all my strength. When this out-digging was completed, the ditch was so deep that, when I went down into it, it seemed like my grave. Since then we have been the subjects of a great deal of secret, unseen, underground work. The Lord has spent upon us a world of care. My brother, you would not like to unveil those great searchings of heart of which you have been the subject. You have been honored in public; and, if so, you have had *many a whipping behind the door* lest you should glory in your flesh. Whenever God has filled your boat with fish, and you have been more than ordinarily successful, that boat has begun to sink. Great mercies are great humblers of sincere souls.

All those chastenings, humblings and searchings of heart have been a private laying of foundations for higher things. Ay, and the Lord has done much more than this in His own unseen but effectual way. He has given instruction and revelation, and sanctified fellowship, and these have been your own and not another's. No one has seen what the Lord has wrought in you; but if it had not been for this, you could not have been built up in holiness and usefulness. Thank God, He works the greater wonders of His love in the dark, out of sight! Yet, as the foundation is the most important part of the building, so the secret, humbling processes of grace have a value second to none.

II. I want you now to see that

THIS MUST BE OUR METHOD.

First, let it be so *in the building up of our own life.* Every man and woman here, but especially those who are young, have a life to build up. It is a great thing to begin by believing good solid doctrine. Some people have believed twenty different Gospels in so many years; how many more they will believe before they get to their journey's end it would be difficult to predict. I thank God I never knew but one Gospel, and I have been so perfectly satisfied with it, that I do not want to know any other. Constant change of creed is sure loss. If a tree has to be taken up two or three times a year, you will not need to build a very large loft in which to store the apples. When people are always shifting their doctrinal principles, they are not likely to bring forth much fruit to the glory of God

ARTESIAN GRACE.

Beloved, how much is done in private by every Christian, who is really sanctified, in the matter of the mastering of sin. It is not fit, in cases of inward conflict, to open the door or the window, and bid everybody come and see. If you have the wild beast of sin to tackle, shut the door, and have it out alone. God helping you! You will never attain to a holy life unless there are secret conflicts with sin. There must also be hidden communings with God. That grace which is artesian is grace indeed. I pray God to deliver us from the present superficialities of religion. Unless men have new hearts and right spirits,

it is all in vain that they make new professions. Be thorough, be real, be intense! In your building up of character, look well to the foundation.

So it must be, next, in the building up of a church. Is that a church of God which is not founded on everlasting truth? There are numbers of hasty builders with wood, hay and stubble; but these neither attend to foundation nor to material laid thereon. For my part, although I would be zealous in the service of my Lord, I had rather, by the grace of God, "lay great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones" upon the solid, rocky old doctrines of the Gospel, than gather the greatest crowd without faith and life. The stones of the temple were so squared and polished that you could not get a knife in between them when they were placed side by side; the stones thus adjusted were like a solid, united mass. So let us build. "Slow work," say you. Yes, but it will be equally slow in coming down, and that is the thing we must care about: we build for eternity.

To maintain solid truth you need solid people. Vital godliness is therefore to be aimed at. Alas! much has been done of late to promote the production of dwarfish Christians. The endeavor has been to increase breadth at the expense of depth. I look with great delight, although with much sorrow, upon our Society's

CHURCH-BUILDING ON THE CONGO.

When we think of the many men who have died there, it has indeed been true already that "great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones" have been

laid for a foundation. If God will enable His Church to make such sacrifices, He means to build a fair palace for His glory. When Christian men, for the truth's sake, can part with friends, lose popularity, and involve themselves in loss, then are "great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones" being built into the foundation of the temple of the Lord.

This morning a large number of friends are present who have been attending the Sunday-school Convention. I welcome them heartily, and I wish to turn my subject toward them by saying: Dear friends, in the building up of character in others we must mind that we do the foundation work well. Sunday-school teachers are those who do the foundation work; for they begin first with young hearts, while they are tender and susceptible. It is a most important thing that we have our children and young people well instructed in divine truth and soundly converted. Fundamental truths are as much connected with the salvation of a child as with the salvation of a full-grown man. Christ receives adults, but He also suffers little children to come to Him. Let us always take good heed that our Sunday-school teaching is as truthful as our instruction in the church.

But be it never forgotten that the major part of teaching will lie in example; and, therefore, the life of the teacher must be of the very best. It is wonderful how children copy the conduct of a beloved teacher: for good or for evil, the force of example over the imitative faculty of youth is very great. When their hearts are tender they are moulded for God and good

things, as much by what they see in our character as by what they hear from our lips. Most of you have seen in the British Museum the Egyptian brick which bears the mark of a dog's foot upon it. When it was as yet soft mud, a dog, who was wandering through the brick-field, set his signature upon it, and there it stands—*Dog of Nilus : his mark.* Any casual word or foolish act may make a mark on a child's character as indelible as the dog's signature. This may be done when we are not intending it ; how much more when with our heart's intent we write upon a loving mind!

A BIBLE-CLASS TEACHER.

I remember a man of God, who has now gone to his reward, who was the means of producing under God, a library of useful lives. I do not mean books in paper, but books in boots. Many young men were decided for the Lord by his means, and became preachers, teachers, deacons, and other workers; and no one would wonder that it was so, if he knew the man who trained them. He was ready for every good word and work; but he gave special attention to his Bible-class, in which he set forth the Gospel with clearness and zeal. Whenever anyone of his young men left the country town in which he lived, he would be sure to have a parting interview. There was a wide-spreading oak down in the fields; and there he was wont to keep an early morning appointment with John, or Thomas, or William; and that appointment very much consisted of earnest pleadings with the Lord, that in going up to the great city the young

man might be kept from sin, and made useful. Under that tree several decided for the Saviour. It was an impressive act, and left its influence; for many men came, in after years, to see the spot made sacred by their teacher's prayers.

But, beloved friends, one of the most important things about dealing with children is, that we teach them what we have well prepared. Their mental food must be carefully cooked. If ever a teacher goes to the class without preparing the lesson, the teaching is sure to be very poor work.

NOBODY SEES YOU

preparing your lesson; nobody commends you for your diligent research. It is the public address which is noted; but the secret study is that to which the commendation really belongs. If this private preparation is neglected, it is a very serious omission. Indeed, bad work in places which are not looked at is a wretched order of things. Some time ago it fell to me, as executor, to arrange for the sale of the goods and effects in a house most elegantly furnished. Certain fine pictures were to go to Christy and Manson's. The drawing-room was expensively adorned and the wall decorations were elaborate with a pattern in which gold stars were somewhat plentiful. When the paintings were taken down, I was not a little surprised to see that behind them the wall was bare of ornament, so that at no time could those pictures have been shifted without showing how the decoration had been stinted. The owner was rich; yet his tradesman must needs practice such pinching economy of a little

gilding. I am afraid if we were to take down the pictures in some Sunday-school teachers and Christian ministers, there would be seen ugly patches of neglect.

See to it that your heart and soul is worked into your teaching. Next time we are studying the Scripture lessons, let us think to ourselves, "This is foundation work. No one will know how I have worked at it; but the Lord, whom I serve, will take note of all that I do, and He will be pleased with conscientious foundation work." Brethren, we must put "good stones, costly stones, and hewed stones" into the unseen part of our edifice.

III. My time fails me; but under my third head I must carefully, though briefly, set forth the reasons why this should be done. It is

A WISE METHOD.

First, because it is suitable for God. You build your temple for God, and not for men: you should, therefore, make that part of the building good which will be seen *by Him;* and as He sees it all, it must be all of the best. A Grecian sculptor had to prepare an image of a god for one of the temples. He was working away with all his might at the back of the head, and at the hinder garments of the figure. One said to him, "Your work is needless for that part of the figure is to be built into the wall." "But," said he, "the gods can see in the wall. This is for the gods, and not for men." Let us catch the spirit of the heathen artist, and do work for God in a manner fit for the Omniscient.

Next, look well to the foundation that is out of sight, for your own sake. No builder can afford to be negligent over the unseen part of a building; for it would involve a serious injury to his character. The very act of

SCAMPING IS DEGRADING

and mean, and lowers a man's tone. I do not care who he is, if he habitually trifles over that which is not seen, the habit will defile his sincerity in other respects, and lead him to practical hypocrisy in religious concerns. The bare idea that we need not do our best if we are not seen, is debasing to the soul. To-day many aim at doing things cheaply, getting through work as fast as possible, and making a great show for the money. Let us avoid this popular form of lying. "Why," saith one, "nobody would respect you any the less if you did such work slightingly, for everybody else would do so." Listen: I should respect myself the less if I scamped my work, and I set a great value upon my own respect of myself. A conscience void of offence, both toward God and toward men, is of more worth than applause.

Further, lay the foundation well, and look to that part which is out of sight, because in this way you will secure the superstructure. There was a bit of a flaw in the foundation, but nobody saw it; for the builder covered it up very quickly, and ran up the whole concern as quickly as possible. The walls were built, and built well. It seemed clear that the

FAULT DOWN BELOW

was of no consequence whatever: and as it had a

little cheapened the underground construction, was it not so much the better? How long was this the case? Well, the next year nothing happened; a longer time passed away, and then an ugly crack came down the wall. Had there been an earthquake? No: there was no earthquake. Perhaps a cyclone had beaten upon the work? No: there was no cyclone: the weather was the same as usual. What was the cause of that gaping space which marred the beauty of the building, and threatened to bring it down? It was that blunder long ago: that underground neglect produced the terrible mischief above, which would involve a great expense, and perhaps render it needful to take all the building down. If to-day you do not teach your children the Gospel fully and clearly, the evil may not be seen in your present classes, nor, possibly, even in this generation; but children's children will bear the impress of the slight work.

Beloved, lastly, do look well to the foundation, and to the secret part of your dealings with God, because *there is*

A FIRE COMING

which will try all things. "Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." No matter where we build, nor how we build, the fire will come upon all the works of man. The wood, hay, and stubble builders cry, "Do not bring any fire here! The proposal is horrible!" But in vain do they protest, for God has determined that the fire shall be.

Now, even should you build the upper and visible part of your life with stone, it will not avail if the under portion is of hay. The fire will bring it all down. A life well grounded in Christ Jesus, made sound throughout by the power of the Spirit, will bear to be inspected of God, and even to be inspected by the envious eyes of men, who would fain find fault with it; and at last it will bear the trial of the judgment-day, and will be found to the praise and glory of God for ever and ever. Therefore, see to it that you lay the foundation of all your religion with "great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones," that so it may last forever.

XXII.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB.

TEXT—"*The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.*" *Rev. 19:7, 8.*

CHRIST AS A LAMB.—SEEN ON EARTH TAKING AWAY SINS.—IN HEAVEN GLORIFIED.—IMPLIES THAT SACRIFICE IS THE ESSENTIAL QUALITY.—I. THE ANTECEDENTS OF THE MARRIAGE.—DESTRUCTION OF THE HARLOT CHURCH.—A PECULIAR VOICE.—THE RESPONSE.—II. THE MARRIAGE ITSELF.—THE RESULT OF ETERNAL GIFT.—THE COMPLETION OF BETROTHAL.—THE PERFECTING OF THE CHURCH.—THE HOME-BRINGING.—III. THE BRIDEGROOM.—IV. THE PREPARATION OF THE BRIDE.

Do not forget that, whenever we read of Christ as a Lamb, it is to remind us of His suffering and death in our room and place and stead, for the putting away of our sin. Under that character we looked to Him, some of us, years ago, and found peace at the first. We are still looking to Him under that same character; and when we attain to heaven, we shall not have to change our thought of Him, but we shall still see Him as a Lamb that has been slain. In our lowest place, when we came out of the Egypt of our bondage, He was the Lamb of God's passover; and in our highest place, in the heavenly temple, we shall still regard Him as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." This morning my principal aim shall be to show you that the blessed and glorious union, which is to be celebrated

BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND HER LORD,

will be the marriage "*of the Lamb.*" The ever-blessed

and eternal union of hearts with Christ will be in reference to His sacrifice, specially and emphatically. The perfected union of the entire Church of God with her divine husband is here described by the beloved apostle—who laid his head upon His Master's bosom, and knew most about Him, and who was under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost—in these words: "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready."

Whatever else we think of at this time, my discourse will aim at this as the white of the target—namely, that Jesus Christ is the Lamb, the sacrifice, is not only the beginning, but the end; not only the foundation, but the topstone of the whole sacred edifice of the temple of grace. The consummation of the whole work of redemption is the marriage of the church to Christ; and, according to "the true sayings of God," this is "the marriage of the Lamb."

I. First, I invite your attention to

THE ANTECEDENTS OF THE MARRIAGE.

What will happen before the public marriage is celebrated? One great event will be the destruction of the harlot church. I have just read in your hearing, the previous chapter, which declares the overwhelming destruction which will fall upon that evil system. Any church which puts in the place of justification by faith in Christ another method of salvation, is a harlot church. The doctrine of justification by faith in Christ is the article of a standing or a falling church. Where the blood is precious, there is life; where atonement by the sacrifice is preached and

loved, there will the Spirit of God bear effectual testimony; but where human priests are put in the place of Jesus, where pardons can be purchased, where there is an unbloody sacrifice instead of the great propitiation, and sacraments are exalted as the means of regeneration; there the Church is no longer a chaste virgin unto Christ, but she hath turned aside from her purity.

Furthermore, in the immediate connection, we note that before the marriage of the Lamb, there was a peculiar voice. Read the fifth verse: "And a voice came." Where from? "A voice came out of the throne." Whose voice was that? It was not the voice of the Eternal God; for it said, "Praise our God, all ye His servants." Whose voice, then, could it be? No one but God could be upon the throne save the Lamb, who is God. Surely, it was He who said, "Praise our God." The Mediator, God-and-man in one person, was on the throne as a Lamb, and He announced the day of His own marriage. Who should do it but He? He speaks the word which calls on all the servants of God to praise Him, because His complete victory had come.

Next, notice the response to this voice; for this also precedes the marriage. No sooner did this one august voice summon them to praise, than immediately "I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude." Who can imagine

THE ACCLAMATIONS

of that glorious day? We now preach the Gospel, as it were, in a corner, and few there are that will

applaud the King of kings. Still, the Christ wendeth His way through the world as an unknown or forgotten man; and His Church, following behind Him, seemeth as a forlorn and forsaken woman—few there be that care for her. But in that day when her Lord is seen as the King of kings, and she is openly acknowledged as His spouse, what welcomes will be heard, what bursts of adoring praise unto the Lord God!

Observe that this tremendous volume of sound will be full of rejoicing and of devout homage. "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him." Double joy will be there, and its expression will be homage to the Lord God. The joy of joys will be the delight of Christ in His perfectly gathered Church. There is

JOY IN HEAVEN

in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth; but when all these repenting sinners are gathered into one perfected body, and married to the Lamb, what will be the infinite gladness! Heaven is always heaven, and unspeakably full of blessedness; but even heaven has its holidays, even bliss has its overflowings; and on that day when the springtide of the infinite ocean of joy shall have come, what a measureless flood of delight shall overflow the souls of all glorified spirits as they perceive that the consummation of love's great design is come—"The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready"!

Thus, I have given you a hint of what will precede the marriage of the Lamb, in all of which you may observe that Jesus wears His character of the Lamb.

The harlot church hath fought against the Lamb, and the Lamb hath overcome her forces. He it is that, on the throne, speaks to His people as His brethren; it is to Him that the response is given; for the joy and the delight all spring from the fact that the marriage is that of the Lamb whom the Father glorifies, and who glorifies the Father.

II. Now may I be helped by the Spirit of God, while I lead you on to

THE MARRIAGE ITSELF.

"The marriage of the Lamb is come." Often as you hear about this marriage of the Lamb, I greatly question whether any here have any precise idea what it means. The marriage of the Lamb is the result of the eternal gift of the Father. Our Lord says, "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me." His prayer was, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world."

Next: this is the completion of the betrothal, which took place with each of them in time. I shall not attempt elaborate distinctions; but as far as you and I were concerned, the Lord Jesus betrothed each one of us unto Himself in righteousness, when first we believed on Him. Then He took us to be His, and gave Himself to be ours, so that we could sing, "My beloved is mine, and I am His." This was the essence of the marriage. Paul, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, represents our Lord as already married to the Church. This may be illustrated by

THE ORIENTAL CUSTOM,

by which, when the bride is betrothed, all the sanctities of marriage are involved in those espousals; but yet there may be a considerable interval before the bride is taken to her husband's house. She dwells with her former household, and has not yet forgotten her kindred and her father's house, though still she is espoused in truth and righteousness. Afterward, she is brought home on an appointed day, the day which we should call the actual marriage; but yet the betrothal is, to Orientals, of the very essence of the marriage. Well, then, you and I are betrothed to our Lord to-day, and He is joined to us by inseparable bonds.

THE DAY OF PERFECTING.

The marriage day indicates the perfecting of the body of the Church. I have already told you that the Church will then be completed, and it is not so now. This Church which is affianced unto the heavenly Bridegroom is not visible as yet, for she is in the process of formation. The music of the heavenly harmonies as yet lacks certain voices. Some of its needful notes are too bass for those already, and others are too high for them, till the singers come who are ordained to give the choir its fullest range. At the Crystal Palace you have seen the singers come trooping in. The conductor is all anxiety if they seem to linger. Still, some are away. The time is nearly up, and you see seats up there on the right, and a vacant block down there on the left. Even so with the heavenly choir: they are streaming

in; the orchestra is filling up, but yet there is room, and yet there is demand for other voices to complete the heavenly harmony.

By this marriage is meant more than I have told you. There is

THE HOME-BRINGING.

You are not to live here forever in these tents of Kedar, among a people of a strange tongue; but the blessed Bridegroom cometh to take you to the happy country, where you shall no longer say, "My soul is among lions." All the faithful shall soon be away to thy land, O Emmanuel! We shall dwell in the land that floweth with milk and honey, the land of the unclouded and unsetting sun, the home of the blessed of the Lord. Happy, indeed, will be the home-bringing of the perfect Church!

I cannot tell you all it means, but certainly this marriage signifies that all who have believed in Him shall then enter into a bliss which shall never end; a bliss which no fear approacheth, or doubt becloudeth. They shall be forever with the Lord, forever glorified with Him. A day will come, the day of days, time's crown and glory, when, all conflict, risk, and judgment ended forever, the saints, arrayed in the righteousness of Christ, shall be eternally one with Him in living, loving, lasting union, partaking together of the same glory, the glory of the Most High. What must it be to be there! My dear hearers, will you be there? Make your calling and election sure. If you are not trusting in the Lamb on earth, you will not reign with the Lamb in His glory.

He that doth not love the Lamb, as the atoning sacrifice, shall never be the bride of the Lamb. How can you hope to be glorified with Him if you neglect Him in the day of His scorning?

III. But we pass on now to dwell emphatically upon the fact that the character under which

THE BRIDEGROOM

appears is that of the Lamb. "The marriage of *the Lamb* is come." It was next *as the Lamb that He loved us and proved His love.* Beloved, He did not give us words of love merely when He came from heaven to earth, and dwelt among us "a lowly man before His foes;" but He proceeded to deeds of truest affection. The supreme proof of His love was that He was led as a lamb to the slaughter. When He poured out His blood as a sacrifice, it might have been said, "Behold how He loved them!" So you see, as a Lamb He proved His love, and as a Lamb He celebrated His marriage with us.

Go a step further. Love in marriage must be on both sides; and it is as the Lamb that we first came to love Him. I had no love to Christ; how could I have till I saw His wounds and blood? "We love Him, because He first loved us." His perfect life was a condemnation to me, much as I was compelled to admire it; but the love that drew me to Him was shown in His substitutionary character, when He bore my sins in His own body on the tree. Is it not so with you, beloved? I have heard a great deal about conversions through admiration of the character of Christ, but I have never met with one; all I have

ever met with have been conversions through a sense of need of salvation, and a consciousness of guilt, which could never be satisfied save by His agony and death, through which sin is justly pardoned, and evil is subdued. This is the great heart-winning doctrine. Christ loves us as the Lamb, and we love Him as the Lamb. Further, marriage is the most

PERFECT UNION.

Surely, it is as the Lamb that Jesus is most closely joined to His people. Our Lord came very close to us when He took our nature, for thus He became bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. He came very near to us when, for this cause, He left His Father and became one flesh with His Church. He could not be sinful, as she was; but He did take her sins upon Himself, and bear them all away, as it is written, "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." When "He was numbered with the transgressors," and when the sword of vengeance smote Him in our stead, then He came nearer to us than ever He could do in the perfection of His Incarnation.

And oh, beloved, when you come to think of it, to be married to Him, to be one with Him, to have no thought, no object, no desire, no glory, but that which dwells in Him that liveth and was dead—will not this be heaven indeed, where the Lamb was the light thereof? Forever to contemplate and adore Him who offered up Himself without spot unto God, as our sacrifice and propitiation — this shall be an endless feast of love. We shall never weary of this subject.

IV. Now we come to the preparedness of

"His wife hath made herself ready." Up till now the Church has always been spoken of as His bride; now she is "His wife"—that is a deeper, dearer, more-matured word than "bride": "*His wife* hath made herself ready." The Church has now come to the fullness of her joy, and has taken possession of her status and dower as "His wife." What does it mean —"hath made herself ready"?

It signifies, first, that she willingly and of her own accord comes to her Lord, to be His, and to be with Him forever. This she does with all her heart: "She hath made herself ready." She does not enter into this engagement with reluctance. Some unwisely speak of the grace of God as though it were a physical force, which sets a constraint upon the will of the quickened man. Beloved, I never preach to you in that fashion. Grace is the great liberating force. No action of the soul is more free than that by which it quits sin and closes with Christ. Then the man comes to himself. The heart is free from compulsion when its love goes forth toward the Lord Jesus.

Does it not mean that she has put away from herself all evil, and all connection with the corruptions of the harlot church has been destroyed? She has struggled against error, she has fought against infidelity, and both have been put down by her holy watchfulness and earnest testimony; and so she is ready for the Lord. Does it not also mean that in the great day of the consummation the Church will be one? Alas for the divisions among us! You do not

know what denomination my friend belonged to who prayed just now. Well, I shall not tell you. You could not judge from his prayer. "The saints in prayer appear as one." Denomination! A plague upon denominationalism! There should be but one denomination: we should be denominated by the name of Christ, as the wife is named by her husband's name. As long as the Church of Christ has to say, "My right arm is Episcopalian, and my left arm is Wesleyan, and my right foot is Baptist, and my left foot is Presbyterian or Congregational," she is not ready for the marriage. She will be ready when she has washed out these stains, when all her members have "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." Unity is a main part of the readiness here spoken of.

THE BRIDE'S DRESS.

I beg you to notice what the preparation was. It is described in the eighth verse: "To her was granted." I will go no further. Whatever perparation it was that she made, in whatever apparel she was arrayed; it was granted to her. Observe that the harlot church wore fine linen also, but then she had with it purple and silk and scarlet and precious stones and pearls. I do not know whence the harlot had obtained her apparel, but I know where the true Church found her wedding dress, for it is written, "To her was granted." This was a gift of sovereign grace, the gift of her Beloved: "To her was granted."

Look at the apparel of the wife, "To her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white." How simple her raiment! Only fine

linen, clean and white! The more simple our worship, the better. The true Church of Christ is

CONTENT WITH WHITE LINEN,

and no more. She asked not for those fine things we read about in connection with the harlot. She envied not the unchaste one, her harpers and musicians and pipers and trumpeters; she was content with her simple harp and joyful song. She did not need all manner of vessels of ivory, and precious wood, brass and iron and marble. She did not seek for cinnamon and odors and ointments, nor aught else of that finery with which people nowadays try to adorn their worship. The harlot church bedecks herself with her architecture and her millinery and her perfumery and her oratory and her music; but those who would follow the Lamb, whithersoever He goeth, will keep their worship, their practice, and their doctrine pure and simple, avoiding all the blandishments of carnal policy and human wisdom, content with the truth as it is in Jesus. What more beautiful than pure white linen?

In the Greek our text runs thus: "Fine linen, clean and white; for fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints." We shall have

A COMPLETE ARRAY

of righteousnesses in Christ's perfect righteousness active and passive—a garment for the head, and a garment for the feet, and for the loins. Every form of righteousness will go to make up the believer's outfit; only, all of it is *granted*, and none of it is of our own purchasing. We shall not have Christ's

righteousness to cover up our sin, as some blasphemously say, for we shall have no sin to cover. We shall not want Christ's righteousness to make an evil heart seem pure; we shall be as perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect.

Best of all, we shall be arrayed in that day with that which pleases the bridegroom. Do I not remember how He said, "I counsel thee to buy of Me white raiment?" Yes, she has

REMEMBERED HIS BIDDING.

She has nothing else but that "fine linen" which is "the righteousness of saints"; and this He delights in. She comes to the Lamb, bearing about her the result of His own passion, and of His own Spirit, and she is well pleasing in His eyes. The Lord sees in her of the travail of His soul, and He is satisfied.

I have done when I have again put this question: Do you trust the Lamb? I warn you, if you have a religion which has no blood of Christ in it, it is not worth a thought: you had better be rid of it, it will be of no use to you. I warn you, also, that unless you love the Lamb you cannot be married to the Lamb; for He will never be married to those who have no love to Him. As many of you as hope to be saved by the works of the law, or by anything else apart from His blood and righteousness, you have unchristianized yourselves; you have no part in Jesus here, and you shall have no part in Him hereafter, when He shall take to Himself His own redeemed Church, to be His spouse for ever and ever. God bless you, for Christ's sake.

XXIII.

THE ABIDING OF THE SPIRIT THE GLORY OF THE CHURCH.

TEXT—*Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work: for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts; according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so My spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not." Haggai 2, 4:5.*

SATAN HINDERING THE WORK OF GOD.—THE EVILS OF THE DEVIL.—I. DISCOURAGEMENT FORBIDDEN.—DISCOURAGEMENT IS WEAKENING—II. ENCOURAGEMENT IMPARTED.—THE SPIRIT IS WITH US.—TO RAISE UP OTHER USEFUL MEN.—TO MOVE THE WHOLE CHURCH.—FLOOD TIDE OF SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE.—SHAKING THE HOSTS OF UNBELIEF.—THE BLACK HORSE IN THE SEA.—III. ENCOURAGEMENT FURTHER APPLIED.

SATAN is always doing his utmost to stay the work of God. He hindered these Jews from building the temple; and to-day he endeavors to hinder the people of God from spreading the Gospel. A spiritual temple is to be builded for the Most High, and if by any means the evil one can delay its uprising he will stick at nothing; if he can take us off from working with faith and courage for the glory of God, he will be sure to do it. He is very cunning, and knows how to change his argument and yet keep to his design; little cares he how he works, so long as he can hurt the cause of God. In the case of the Jewish people on their return from captivity he sought to prevent the building of the temple

BY MAKING THEM SELFISH AND WORLDLY,

so that every man was eager to build his own house, and cared nothing for the house of the Lord. Each family pleaded its own urgent needs. Like some in our day, they saw to themselves first, and God's turn was very long in coming; hence the prophet cried, "Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?"

By the mouth of His servant Haggai stern rebukes were uttered, and the whole people were aroused. All hands were put to the work; course after course of stone began to rise; and then another stumbling-block was thrown in the way of the workers. The older folks remarked that this was a very small affair compared with the temple of Solomon, of which their fathers had told them; in fact, their rising building was nothing at all, and not worthy to be called a temple. Feeling that their work would be very poor and insignificant, the people had little heart to go on. Being discouraged by the humiliating contrast, they began to be slack; and as they were quite willing to accept any excuse, and here was an excuse ready-made for them, they would soon have been at a stand-still had not the prophet met

THE WILES OF THE ARCH-ENEMY

with another word from the Lord. Twice the voice was heard—"*I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts.*' They were also assured that what they builded was accepted, and that the Lord meant to fill the new house with glory; yea, He meant to light it up with a glory greater than that which honored the temple of

Solomon. They were not spending their strength for nought, but were laboring with divine help and favor. Thus they were encouraged to put their shoulders to the work; the walls rose in due order, and God was glorified in the building up of His Zion.

The present times are, in many respects, similar to those of Haggai. History certainly repeats itself within the Church of God as well as outside of it; and therefore the messages of God need to be repeated also. The words of

SOME ALMOST-FORGOTTEN PROPHET

may be re-delivered by the watchman of the Lord in these present days, and be a timely word for the present emergency. We are not free from the worldliness which puts self first and God nowhere, else our various enterprises would be more abundantly supplied with the silver and the gold which are the Lord's, but which even professing Christians reserve for themselves. When this selfish greed is conquered, then comes in a timorous depression. Among those who have escaped from worldliness there is apt to be too much despondency, and men labor feebly as for a cause which is doomed to failure. This last evil must be cured. I pray that our text may this morning flame from the Lord's own mouth with all the fire which once blazed about it. May faint hearts be encouraged and

DROWSY SPIRITS BE AROUSED,

as we hear the Lord say, "*My spirit remaineth among you; fear ye not.*"

I shall enter fully upon the subject, by the assistance

of the Holy Spirit, by calling your attention to *discouragement forbidden.* Then I shall speak of *encouragement imparted;* and having done so, I shall linger with this blessed text, which overflows with comfort, and shall speak, in the third place, of *encouragement further applied.* Oh that our Lord, who knows how to speak a word in season to him that is weary, may cheer the hearts of seekers by what shall be spoken under this last head of discourse.

I. To begin with, here is DISCOURAGEMENT FORBIDDEN. Discouragement comes readily enough to us poor mortals who are occupied in the work of God, seeing it is a work of faith, a work of difficulty, a work above our capacity, and a work much opposed.

Discouragement is very natural: it is a native of the soil of manhood. To believe is supernatural, faith is the work of the Spirit of God; to

DOUBT IS NATURAL TO FALLEN MEN,

for we have within us an evil heart of unbelief.

Discouragement may come and does come to us, as it did to these people, from a consideration of the great things which God deserves at our hands and the small things which we are able to render. Thus have we been discouraged. The enemy has worked upon us by this means, yet he has made us argue very wrongly. Because we could not do much, we have half resolved to do nothing! Because what we did was so poor we were inclined to quit the work altogether! This is evidently absurd and wicked. The enemy can use humility for his purpose as well as pride. Whether he makes us think too much or

too little of our work, it is all the same to him so long as he can get us off from it.

Moreover, the enemy contrasts our work with that of others, and with that of those who have gone before us. We are doing so little as compared with other people, therefore let us give up. We cannot build like Solomon, therefore let us not build at all. Yet, brethren, there is a falsehood in all this; for, in truth,

NOTHING IS WORTHY OF GOD.

The great works of others, and even the amazing productions of Solomon, all fell short of His glory. What house could man build for God? What are cedar, and marble, and gold as compared with the glory of the Most High?

The tendency to depreciate the present because of the glories of the past is also injurious. But, brethren, we must not allow this sense of littleness to hamper us; for God can bless our littleness, and use it for His glory. I notice that the great men of the past thought of themselves even as we think of ourselves. Instead of being discouraged because what we do is unworthy of God, and insignificant compared with what was done by others, let us gather up our strength to reform our errors, and reach to higher attainments. Let us throw our heart and soul into the work of the Lord, and yet do something more nearly in accordance with our highest ideal of what our God deserves of us. Let us excel our ancestors. Let us aspire to be even more godly, more conscientious, and more sound in the faith than they were, for the Spirit of God remaineth with us.

Wherever discouragement comes in it is dreadfully weakening. I am sure it is weakening, because the prophet was bidden to say three times to the governor, high-priest, and people, "Be strong." This proves

THAT THEY HAD BECOME WEAK.

Being discouraged, their hands hung down, and their knees were feeble. Faith girds us with omnipotence, but unbelief makes everything hang loose and limp about us. Distrust, and thou wilt fail in everything; believe, and according to thy faith so shall it be unto thee. To lead a discouraged people to the Holy War is as difficult as for Xerxes' commanders to conduct the Persian troops to battle against the Greeks. The vassals of the great king were driven to the conflict by whips and sticks, for they were afraid to fight; do you wonder that they were defeated? A church that needs constant exhorting and compelling accomplishes nothing. The Greeks had no need of blows and threats, for each man was a lion, and courted the encounter, however great the odds against him. Each Spartan fought *con amore;* he was never more at home than when contending for the altars and the hearths of his country. We want Christian men of this same sort, who have faith in their principles, faith in the doctrines of grace, faith in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; and who therefore contend earnestly for the faith in these days when piety is

MOCKED AT FROM THE PULPIT,

and the Gospel is sneered at by professional preachers.

Discouragement not only weakens men, but *it takes them off from the service of God.* It is significant that the prophet said to them, "Be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, *and work.*" They had ceased to build; they had begun to talk and argue, but they had laid down the trowel. They were extremely wise in their observations, and criticisms, and prophecies; but the walls did not rise. One person knew exactly how big the former temple was; another one declared that their present architect was not up to the mark, and that the structure was not built in a scientific manner; one objected to this and another to that; but everybody was wiser than all the rest, and sneered at old-fashioned ways. It is always so when we are discouraged; we cease from the work of the Lord, and waste time in talk and nonsensical refinements. May the Lord take away discouragement from any of you who now suffer from it. I suppose some of you do feel it, for at times

IT CREEPS OVER MY HEART

and makes me go with heaviness to my work. I believe that God's truth will come to the front yet, but it hath many adversaries to-day. All sorts of unbeliefs are being hatched out from under the wings of "modern thought." The Gospel seems to be regarded as a nose of wax, to be altered and shaped by every man who wishes to show his superior skill. Nor is it in doctrine alone, but in practice also that the times are out of joint. Separateness from the world, and holy living, are to give place to gaiety and theatre-going. To follow Christ fully has gone out

of fashion with many of those from whom we once hoped better things.

II. Secondly, here is THE ENCOURAGEMENT IMPARTED, which is the grand part of our text. "According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so My spirit remaineth among you; fear ye not." God remembers His covenant and stands to His ancient promises.

To what end, my brethren, is this Spirit with us? Let us think of this, that we may be encouraged at this time. The Spirit of God remaineth among you *to aid and assist the ministry which He has already given.* Oh, that the prayers of God's people would always go up for God's ministers, that they may speak with a divine power and influence which

NONE SHALL BE ABLE TO GAINSAY!

We look too much for clever men; we seek out fluent and flowery speakers; we sigh for men cultured and trained in all the knowledge of the heathen; nay, but if we sought more for unction, for divine authority, and for that power which doth hedge about the man of God, how much wiser should we be! Oh, that all of us who profess to preach the Gospel would learn to speak in entire dependence upon the direction of the Holy Spirit, not daring to utter our own words, but even trembling lest we should do so, and committing ourselves to that secret influence without which nothing will be powerful upon the conscience or converting to the heart.

This same Spirit who of old gave to His Church eminent teachers *can raise up other and more useful*

men. The other day, a brother from Wales told me of the great men he remembered; he said that he had never heard such a one as Christmas Evans, who surpassed all men when he was in the *hwyl.* I asked him if he knew another Welsh minister who preached like Christmas Evans. "No," he said, "we have no such man in Wales in our days." So in England we have neither Wesley nor Whitefield, nor any of their order; yet, as with God is the residue of the Spirit, He can

FETCH OUT FROM SOME CHIMNEY CORNER

another Christmas Evans, or find in our Sunday-school another George Whitefield, who shall declare the Gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven. Let us never fear for the future, or despair for the present, since the Spirit of God remaineth with us. What if the growing error of the age should have silenced the last tongue that speaks out the old Gospel, let not faith be weakened! I hear the tramp of legions of soldiers of the cross. I hear the clarion voice of hosts of preachers. "The Lord gave the word; great was the company of those that published it." Have faith in God through our Lord Jesus Christ! When He ascended on high He led captivity captive, and received gifts for men. He then gave apostles, teachers, preachers, and evangelists, and He can do the like again. Let us fall back upon the eternal God, and never be discouraged for an instant.

Nor is this all. The Holy Spirit being with us, *He can move the whole Church to exercise its varied minis-*

tries. This is one of the things we want very much —that

EVERY MEMBER OF THE CHURCH

should recognize that he is ordained to service. Everyone in Christ, man or woman, hath some testimony to bear, some warning to give, some deed to do in the name of the holy child Jesus; and if the Spirit of God be poured out upon our young men and our maidens, each one will be aroused to energetic service. Both small and great will be in earnest, and the result upon the slumbering masses of our population will surprise us all.

If the Spirit be with us there will come multitudinous conversions. We cannot get at "the lapsed masses," as they are pedantically called. We cannot stir the crass infidelity of the present age; no, *we* cannot, but *He* can. All things are possible with God. If you walk down to our bridges at a certain hour of the day you will see barges and vessels lying in the mud; and all the king's horses and all the king's men cannot stir them. Wait until the tide comes in, and they will walk the water like things of life. The living flood accomplishes at once what no mortals can do. And so to-day our churches cannot stir. What shall we do? Oh, that the Holy Spirit would come with a

FLOOD-TIDE OF HIS BENIGN INFLUENCES,

as He will if we will but believe in Him; as He must if we will but cry unto Him; as He shall if we will cease to grieve Him.

When once the Spirit of God putteth forth His might, all things else will be in accord with Him. Notice that in the rest of the chapter—which I shall read now, not as relating to that temple at all, but to the Church of God—there is great comfort given to us. If the Holy Spirit be once given, then we may expect providence to co-operate with the Church of God. Read verse 6:—"Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake heaven and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. I will shake all nations." Great commotions will co-operate with the Holy Spirit. We may expect that God will work for His people in an extraordinary fashion if they will but be faithful to Him. Empires will collapse, and times will change, for the truth's sake. Expect the unexpected, reckon upon that which is unlikely, if it be necessary for the growth of the kingdom. Of old the earth helped the woman when

THE DRAGON OPENED HIS MOUTH

to drown her with the floods that he cast forth; unexpected help shall come to us when affairs are at their worst.

Specially do I look for a shaking among the hosts of unbelief. How often did the Lord of old rout His enemies without His Israel drawing sword! The watchword was, "Stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord." The adversaries of old fell out among themselves; and they will do so again. When Cadmus slew the dragon with his javelin, he was bidden to sow its teeth in the earth. When he did so, according to the classic fable, he saw rising out of the

ground nodding plumes, and crested helmets, and broad shoulders of armed men. Up from the earth there sprang a host of warriors; but Cadmus needed not to fly; for the moment they found their feet,

THESE CHILDREN OF THE DRAGON

fell upon each other till scarcely one was left. Error, like Saturn, devours its own children. Those that fight against the Lord of hosts are not agreed among themselves; they shall sheathe their swords in each other's bosoms.

I saw in the night vision the sea, the deep and broad sea of truth, flashing with its silver waves. Lo, a black horse came out of the darkness and went down to the deep, threatening to drink it dry. I saw him stand there drinking, and swelling as he drank. In his pride he trusted that he could snuff up Jordan at a draught. I stood by and saw him drink, and then plunge further into the sea, to drink still more Again he plunged in with fury, and

SOON HE LOST HIS FOOTING,

and I saw him no more, for the deep had swallowed *him* that boasted that he would swallow *it*. Rest assured that every black horse of error that comes forth to swallow up the sea of divine truth shall be drowned therein. Wherefore be of good courage. God, who maketh the earth and the heavens to shake, shall cause each error to fall like an untimely fig.

And next, the Lord in this chapter promises His people that they shall have all the supplies they need for His work. They feared that they could not build His house because of their poverty; but, saith the

Lord of hosts, "Thy silver and thy gold are Mine." When the Church of God believes in God, and goes forward bravely, she need not trouble as to supplies. Her God will provide for her. If any say, "If you hold to these old-fashioned doctrines you will lose the educated, the wealthy, the influential," we answer, but

IF WE DO NOT LOSE THE GODLY

and the presence of the Holy Ghost we are not in the least alarmed. If the Holy Ghost remaineth with us, there is a river the streams whereof make glad the city of God.

The best comfort of all remained: "The desire of all nations shall come." This was in a measure fulfilled when Jesus came into that latter house and caused all holy hearts to sing for gladness; but it was not wholly fulfilled in that way, for, if you notice, in the ninth verse it is written, "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, *and in this place will I give peace*," which the Lord did not fully do to the second temple, since that was destroyed by the Romans. But there is another advent, when "the desire of all nations shall come" in power and glory; and this is our highest hope.

III. I should have done if it had not been that this text seemed to me to overflow so much that it might

NOT ONLY REFRESH GOD'S PEOPLE,

but give drink to thirsty sinners who are seeking the Lord. For a moment or two I give myself to

ENCOURAGEMENT FURTHER APPLIED.

It is at the beginning of every gracious purpose that men have most fear, even as these people had who had newly begun to build. When first the Holy Spirit begins to strive with a man and to lead him to Jesus, he is apt to say—"I cannot; I dare not; it is impossible. How can I believe and live?" Now I want to speak to some of you here who are willing to find Christ, and to encourage you by the truth that the Spirit lives to help you. I would even like to speak to those who are *not* anxious to be saved. The Spirit remaineth among us. He can make you feel more deeply the guilt of sin and your need of pardon. "But I have heard so much about conviction and repentance; I do not seem to have either of them." Yet the Spirit remaineth with us, and that Spirit is able to work in you the deepest conviction and the truest repentance. "O sir, I do not feel as if I could do anything"; but the Spirit remaineth with us, and

ALL THINGS THAT ARE NEEDFUL

for godliness He can give. He can work in you to will and to do of His own good pleasure. "But I want to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Who made you want to do that? Who but the Holy Spirit? Therefore He is still at work with you, and though as yet you do not understand what believing is, or else I am persuaded you would believe at once, the Spirit of God can instruct you in it. You are blind, but He can give you sight; you are paralyzed, but He can give you strength—the Spirit of God remaineth.

"Oh, but that doctrine of regeneration staggers me: you know, we must be born again." Yes, we are born again of the Spirit, and the Spirit remaineth still with us. He is still mighty to work that wondrous change, and to bring you out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son. The Spirit remaineth with us, blessed be His name! "Ah, dear sir," says one, "I want to conquer sin." Who made you desire to conquer sin? Who, but the Spirit that remaineth with us? He will give you the sword of the Spirit and

TEACH YOU HOW TO USE IT,

and He will give you both the will and the power to use it successfully. Through the Spirit's might you can overcome every sin, even that which has dragged you down and disgraced you. The Spirit of God is still waiting to help you. When I think of the power of the Spirit of God, I look hopefully upon every sinner here this morning.

I thought when I came in here that I should have a picked congregation, and so I have. You are one of them. Wherever you come from, I want you now to seek the Lord. He has brought you here, and He means to bless you. Yield yourself to Him while His sweet Spirit pleads with you. I wish it might happen that on this fifth day of the ninth month, not the prophet Haggai, but I, God's servant, may have spoken to you such a word as you shall never forget; and may the Lord add to the word by the witness of the Holy Ghost, "From this day will I bless you." Go away with that promise resting upon you. I would

like to give a shake of the hand to every stranger here this morning, and say, "Brother, in the name of the Lord I wish you from this day a blessing." Amen and amen.

XXIV.

LOVE'S LAW AND LIFE.

TEXT—"*If ye love Me, keep My commandments.*"—*John 14:15.*

A CHAPTER FULL OF IFS.—UNCERTAINTY ABOUT OUR PRAYERS.—A SERIOUS IF.—LOVE PROMPTS THE DEED.—LOVE THE CHIEF JEWEL.—SEE TO YOUR OWN HEART.—A JUDICIOUS TEST.—NO FANATICAL CHALLENGE.—JESUS GLORIFIED BY CONSISTENT OBEDIENCE.—TRUE LOVE WILL ENDURE THIS TEST.—"I DO NOT LOVE THE LORD JESUS."

THIS is a chapter singularly full of certainties, and remarkably studded with *ifs*. Concerning most of the great things in it there never can be an "if"; and yet "if" comes up, I think, no less than seven times in the chapter: and "if," too, not about trifles, but about the most solemn subjects. It is, perhaps, worthy of mention that with each of these "ifs" there is something connected, as following out of it, or appearing to be involved in it, or connected with it.

Look at the second verse. "In my father's house are many mansions: *if* it were not so, I would have told you." If there had been no place for us in the glory land Jesus would have told us. If any truth which had not been revealed would have made our hope a folly, our Lord Jesus would have warned us of it; for He has not come to lure us into a fool's paradise, and at last deceive us. He will tell us all that it is necessary for us to know in order to a wise faith and a

sure hope. The Lord hath not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: He has not spoken in

CONTRADICTION OF HIS REVEALED WORD.

Nothing in His secret decrees or hidden designs can shake our confidence or darken our expectation. "*If* it were not so, I would have told you."

Notice the third verse. Again we meet with "if," and its consequence. "*If* I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself." If the Lord Jesus should go away (and this is a supposition no longer, for He has gone), then He would return again in due time. Since He has gone, He will come again; for He has made the one to depend on the other. We make no question that He went up into heaven, for He rose from out the circle of His followers, and they saw Him as He went up into heaven.

The next "if" comes at *the beginning of the seventh verse:*—"*If* ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also." If we really do know the Lord Christ, we know God. In fact, there is no knowing God aright except through His Son Jesus. It is evidently true that men do not long hold to theism pure and simple. If our scientific men get away from the Christ, the incarnate God, before long they drift away from God altogether. They begin to slide down the mountain when they quit the incarnate Deity, and there is no more foothold to stay them. No man comes to the Father but by the Son, and no man long keeps to the Father who does not keep to his faith in the Son. Those who know Christ know God:

but those who are ignorant of the Saviour are ignorant of God, however much they may pride themselves upon their religion.

The next variety of "if" you will find a little farther down in the chapter, namely *in the fourteenth verse:* "*If* ye shall ask anything in My name I will do it." The "if" in this case involves an

UNCERTAINTY ABOUT OUR PRAYERS,

if an uncertainty at all. Taking it for granted that we ask for mercies in the name of Jesus, a glorious certainty is linked thereto. Jesus saith, "I will do it." Here our Lord speaks after a sovereign style. *We* may not say, "I will;" but the "I wills" pertain to Christ. He can answer, and He has the right to answer, and therefore He says without reservation, "I will." "If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it." Oh that we might put the first "if" out of court by continually petitioning the Lord, and signing our petitions with the name of Jesus.

Now comes the "if" of our text, of which I will say nothing for the moment. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." Something, you see, is to come out of this "if" as out of all the others. *If* something, *then* something—"*If* ye love Me," then carry it out to the legitimate result:—"keep My commandments."

You have the next "if" in verse 23:—"Jesus answered and said to him, *if* a man love Me, he will keep My words." Respect to His wisdom, and obedience to His authority, will grow out of love.

"If a man love Me he will keep My words." He will believe in the verbal inspiration of his Lord; he

will regard His teaching as infallible; he will attend to it and remember it. More than this, he will by his conduct carry out the words of his Lord, and so keep them in the best possible manner by enshrining them in his daily life.

The chapter almost closes at the twenty-eighth verse by saying, "If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto my Father; for my Father is greater than I." Where there is an intelligent love to Christ we rejoice in His gains, even though we ourselves appear to be losers thereby. The corporeal absence of our Lord from our midst might seem to be a great loss to us; but we rejoice in it because it is

FOR HIS OWN GREATER GLORY.

Let us now think of our own text, and may the Holy Spirit lead us into the secret chambers of it. "*If* ye love Me, keep My commandments."

The present "if" is a serious one. Let that stand as our first head. Secondly, *the test which is added concerning it is a very judicious one:* "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." In the third place, I will give you the reading of the Revised Version, and say, *that test will be endured by love;* for the words may be interpreted—"If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments." Obedience will follow upon love as a matter of certainty.

I. To begin, then, THE IF IN OUR TEXT IS A VERY SERIOUS ONE. It goes to the very root of the matter. Love belongs to the heart; and every surgeon will tell you that a disease of the heart may not be trifled with. A clever doctor said to me, "I feel at my ease

with any matter if it does not touch the head or the heart." Solomon bids us keep the heart with all diligence, "for out of it are the issues of life." If the mainspring fails, all the works of a watch refuse to act. We cannot, therefore, think little of a question which concerns our love, for it deals with a vital part. O friends, I hope there is no question about our love to Jesus.

Observe how our Saviour puts this *if* concerning love, in such a way as to teach us that *love must be prior to obedience.* The text is not, "Keep My commandments, and then love Me." No, we do not expect pure streams till the fountain is cleansed. Nor does he say, "Keep My commandments, and love Me at the same time," as two separate things, although that might in a measure correspond with truth. But ove is put first, because it is first in importance and first in experience. "If ye love Me"—we must begin with love—"then keep My commandments." Obedience must have love for its mother, nurse, and food. The essence of obedience lies in

THE HEARTY LOVE WHICH PROMPTS THE DEED,

rather than in the deed itself. I can conceive it possible that a man might, in his outward life, keep Christ's commandments, and yet might never keep them at all so as to be accepted before God. If he became obedient by compulsion, but would have disobeyed if he dared, then his heart was not right before God, and his actions were of little worth. The commandments are to be kept out of love to Him

who gave them. See, dear friends, how inward true religion is: how far it exceeds all external formalism! *How deep is the seat of true grace!* You cannot hope to do that which Christ can smile upon until your heart is renewed. A heart at enmity with God cannot be made acceptable by mere acts of piety. It is not what your hands are doing, nor even what your lips are saying; the main thing is what your heart is meaning and intending. Which way are your affections tending? The great fly-wheel which moves the whole machinery of life is fixed in the heart: hence this is the most important of all suggestions—"If ye love Me." "If ye love Me" is a searching sound. I start as I hear it. He that believes in the Lord Jesus Christ for his salvation produces as the first fruit of his faith love to Christ; this must be in us and abound, or nothing is right. *Packed away within that box of sweets called "love" you shall find every holy thing;* but if you have no love what have you? Though you

WEAR YOUR FINGERS TO THE BONE WITH SERVICE,

weep out your eyes with repentance, make your knees hard with kneeling, and dry your throat with shouting, yet if the heart does not beat with love, your religion falls to the ground like a withered leaf in Autumn. *Love is the chief jewel in the bracelet of obedience.* Hear the text, and mark it well: "If ye love Me, keep My commandments."

O sirs, what a mass of religion is cast out as worthless by this text! Men may keep on going to church

and going to chapel, and they may be religious, ay, throughout a whole life ; and, apparently, they may be blameless in their moral conduct, and yet there may be nothing in them, because there is no love to the ever-blessed Christ at the bottom of the profession.

This matter of love to Jesus is put prior to every other, because *it is the best reason for our obedience to Him.* Notice: "If ye love *Me*, keep *My* commandments." Personal affection will produce personal obedience. Do you not see the drift of the words? The blessed Jesus says, "If you love *Me*, keep *My* commandments"; because, truly, operative love is mainly love to a person, and love to our Lord's person begets obedience to His precepts. There are some men for whom you would do anything ; you will to yield to their will. If such a person were to say to you, "Do this," you would do it without question. Perhaps he stands to you in the relation of master, and you are his willing servant. Perhaps he is a venerated friend, and because you esteem and love him, his word is law to you. The Saviour may much more safely than any other

BE INSTALLED IN SUCH A POSITION.

From the throne of your affections He says, "If ye love Me—if really your hearts go out to Me—then let My word be a commandment ; let my commandment be kept in your memory, and then further kept by being observed in your life." So you see the reason why the Master begins with the heart—because there

is no hope of obedience to Him in our actions, unless Ae is enshrined in our affections. *This is the spring and source of all holy living—love to the Holy One.* Dear friends, have you been captured by the beauties of Jesus, and are you held in a divine captivity to the adorable person of your redeeming Lord? Then you have within you the impulse which constrains you to keep His commandments.

It was greatly needful for our Lord thus to address His disciples. Yes, it was necessary to speak thus even to the apostles. He says to the chosen twelve, "If ye love Me." We should never have doubted one of them. We now know by the result that one of them was a traitor to his Lord, and sold Him for pieces of silver; but no one suspected him, for he seemed as loyal as any one of them. Ah! if that question, "If ye love Me," needed to be raised in the sacred college of the twelve, much more must it be allowed to *sift our churches, and to test ourselves.* Brethren this word is exceedingly needful in the present asssembly: hear its voice—"If ye love Me. The mixed multitude here gathered together may be compared to the heap on the threshing-floor, and

THERE IS NEED OF THE WINNOWING FAN.

Perhaps you have almost taken it for granted that you love Jesus; but it must not be taken for granted. Some of you have been born in a religious atmosphere, you have lived in the midst of godly people, and you have never been out into the wicked world to be tempted by its follies; therefore you come to

an immediate conclusion that you must assuredly love the Lord. This is unwise and perilous. Never glory in armor which you have not tested, nor rejoice in love to Christ which has not sustained trial. What an awful thing if you should be deceived and mistaken! It is most kind of the Saviour to raise a question about your love, and thus give you an opportunity of examining yourself and seeing whether you are right at heart.

Remember, if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ he will be *anathema maranatha*, cursed at His coming. This applies to every man, even though he be most eminent. An apostle turned out to be a son of perdition — may not you? Every man, even though he be a learned bishop, or a popular pastor, or a renowned evangelist, or a venerable elder, or an active deacon, or the most ancient member of the most orthodox assembly, may yet turn out to be no lover of the Lord.

While considering the text, let each one view himself apart. What have you to do in this matter with keeping the vineyards of others? See to your own hearts. The text does not say, "If the church loves Me," or, "If such and such a minister loves Me," or, "If your brothers love Me"; but it is, "If *ye* love Me, keep My commandments." The most important question for each one to answer is that which concerns his personal attachment to his Redeemer, and the personal obedience which comes out of it. I press this inquiry upon each one. It may seem

A TRITE AND COMMON-PLACE QUESTION,

but it needs to be put again and again before all in our congregations.

The question is answerable, however. It was put to the apostles, and they could answer it. Peter spoke as all the eleven would have done when he said, "Thou knowest that I love Thee." It is not a question concerning mysteries out of range and beyond judgment; it deals with a plain matter of fact. A man may know whether he loves the Lord or not, and he ought to know. *He who is jealous of himself, and is, therefore, half afraid to speak positively, may all the more truly be a lover of the Lord.* Holy caution may raise a question where the answer is far more certain than in the breasts of those who never even make the inquiry, because they are carnally secure. Do not be content with merely longing to love Jesus; or with longing to know whether you love Him. Not to know whether you love the Lord Jesus is a state of mind so dangerous that I exhort you never to go to sleep till you have escaped from it. A man has no right to smile—I had almost said, he has no right either to eat bread or drink water so long as

THAT QUESTION HANGS IN THE BALANCE.

It ought to be decided. It can be decided. It can be decided at once. Brethren, hear the question suggested by this little word "*if*"; consider it well, and rest not until you can say, "I love the Lord because He hath heard my voice and my supplication."

So much, then, concerning the serious nature of this *if*.

II. In the second place, let me observe that THE TEST WHICH IS PROPOSED IN THE TEXT IS A VERY JUDICIOUS ONE. "If ye love Me, *keep My commandments.*" This is the best proof of love.

The test indicated does not suggest a lawless liberty. It is true we are not under the law, but under grace; but yet we are under law to Christ, and if we love Him we are to keep His commandments. Let us never enter into the counsel of those who do not believe that there are any commandments for believers to keep. Those who do away with duty do away with sin, and consequently with the Saviour. It is not written—If ye love Me, do whatever you please. Jesus does not say—So long as you love Me in your hearts, I care nothing about your lives. There is no such doctrine as that between the covers of this holy book. He that loves Christ is the freest man out of heaven, but he is also the most under bonds. He is free, for Christ has loosed his bonds, but he is put under bonds to Christ by grateful love. The love of Christ constraineth him henceforth to live to the Lord who loved him, lived for him, died for him, and rose again. No, dear friends, we do not desire a lawless life. He that is not under the law as a power for condemnation, yet can say that with his heart he delights in the law of God; he longs after perfect holiness, and

IN HIS SOUL YIELDS HEARTY HOMAGE,

to the precepts of the Lord Jesus. Love is law; the law of love is the strongest of all laws. Christ has

become our Master and King, and His commandments are not grievous.

The text also contains no fanatical challenge. We do not read, "If ye love Me, perform some extraordinary act." The test required is not an outburst of extravagance, or an attempt to realize the ambitious project of a fevered brain. Nothing of the kind. Hermits, nuns and religious mad-caps find no example or precept here. Some persons think that if they love Jesus, they must enter a convent, retire to a cell, dress themselves queerly, or shave their heads. It has been the thought of some men, "If we love Christ we must strip ourselves of everything we possess, put on sackcloth, tie ropes round our waists, and pine in the desert." Others have thought it wise to make gay of themselves by oddity of dress and behavior. The Saviour does not say anything of the kind; but, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." Every now and then we find members of our churches who must needs leave their trades and their callings to show their love for Jesus; children may starve and wives may pine, but their mad whimsies must be carried out for love of Jesus. Under this influence they rush into all sorts of foolery, and soon ruin their characters because they will not take the advice of sobriety, and cannot be satisfied with the grand test of love which our Lord Himself herein lays down. The text does not condemn these light-headed projects in detail, but it does so in the gross by proposing a far more reasonable test—"If ye love Me, keep My commandments."

Why does the Saviour give us this as a test? I think that one reason is, because it is one which *tests whether you are loving Christ in His true position*, or whether your love is to a Christ of your own making, and your own placing. It is easy to crave a half Christ, and refuse a whole Christ. *It is easy also to follow*

A CHRIST OF YOUR OWN CONSTRUCTION,

who is merely an Antichrist. The real Christ is so great and glorious that He has a right to give commandments. Moses never used an expression such as our Saviour here employs. He might say, "Keep God's commandments;" but he would never have said, "Keep *my* commandments." That dear and Divine Person whom we call Master and Lord here says, "Keep *My* commandments." What a commanding person He must be! What lordship He has over His people! How great He is among His saints! If you keep His commandments you are putting Him into the position which He claims. By obedience you own His sovereignty and godhead, and say with Thomas, "My Lord and my God." I am afraid that a great many people know a Christ who is meek and lowly, their servant and Saviour; but they do not know the *Lord* Jesus Christ. Alas! my friends, such people set up a false Christ. We do not love Jesus at all if He is not our Lord and God. It is all cant and hypocrisy, this love to Christ which robs Him of His Deity. I abhor that love to Christ which does not make Him King of kings, and Lord of lords. Love Him, and belittle Him! It is absurd. Follow

your own will in preference to His will, and then talk of love to Him! Ridiculous! This is but the devil's counterfeit of love; it is a contradiction of all true love. Love is loyal; love crowns its Lord with obedience. If you love Jesus aright, you view His every precept as a divine commandment. You love the true Christ if you love a commanding Christ as well as a saving Christ, and

LOOK TO HIM FOR THE GUIDANCE OF YOUR LIFE

as well as for the pardon of your sin.

This test, again, is very judicious, because *it proves the living presence of the object of your love.* Love always desires to have its object near, and it has a faculty of bringing its object near. If you love anybody, that person may be far away, and yet to your thoughts he is close at hand. Love brings the beloved one so near that the thought of him acts upon its life.

It is a most judicious test again, because, by keeping our Lord's commandments, *we are doing that which is most pleasing to Him, and will most glorify Him.* Some enthusiastic Methodist cries: —

"Oh what shall I do my Saviour to praise?"

Hearken, my brother; if you love your Saviour keep His commandments. This is all you have to do, and a great all too. Among the rest, you may come and be baptized, while you are thus earnest to praise your Lord. "If you love Me, keep My commandments." There is the answer to every rapturous inquiry. *Jesus is*

to His commands than by the most extravagant zeal that we can possibly display in what is only will-worship, because He has never commanded it. If you wish to break the alabaster box, and fill the house with sweet perfume ; if you wish to crown His head with rarest gems, the method is before you—"Keep My commandments." You cannot do your Lord so great a favor, or, in the long run, bring to Him so real an honor, as by a complete, continual, hearty obedience to every one of His commandments.

Moreover, the Saviour knew, when He bade us try this test, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments," that *it would prepare us for honoring and glorifying Him in many other ways*: Readthe context:—"If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever." You can greatly glorify Christ if you are filled with the Holy Spirit; but you cannot be filled with the Holy Spirit if you do not keep Christ's commandments. The Spirit of God as a Comforter will come only to those to whom He comes as a Sanctifier. By making us holy He will qualify us for being useful. The Saviour says, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments," because

by which we can glorify His name. If there be any service which your love would aspire to, obedience to your Lord is the way to it.

III. Time has well-nigh gone, or we would dwell upon the third head, which we must now leave, only praying God to prove the truth of it. The third head was this: TRUE LOVE WILL ENDURE THIS TEST. "If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments." This is the Revised version, and I hope it will be written out in capitals upon our revised lives! We will obey, we must obey, since we love Him by whom the command is given.

Come then, brothers and sisters, as the time has gone, let me say this much to you: If you love Christ, set to work to *find out what His commandments are. Study the Scriptures upon every point upon which you have the slightest question.* This sacred oracle must guide you.

Next, *be always true to your convictions* about what Christ's commandments are. Carry them out at all hazards, and carry them out at once. It will be wicked to say, "Hitherto I have obeyed, but I shall stop here." We are committed to implicit obedience to the whole of the Master's will, involve what it may. Will you not agree to this at the outset? If you love Him you will not demur.

Take note of every commandment as it concerns you. Let me mention one or two, and beg you to obey them as you hear them. "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." Is not this a call to you, my brother, to be a missionary? Do you hear it? Will you not say, "Here am I; send me"? Another person has come into this house to-night full of enmity:

SOMEBODY HAS TREATED HIM VERY BADLY,

and he cannot forget it; I pray him to hear the Lord's command: "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." And again, "Little children, love one another." If any of you are in debt, obey this commandment, "Owe no man anything, but to love one another." If you neglect the poor, and live in a niggardly way, hear this commandment: "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away." At the back of all comes this, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." I might stop here all night, and mention, one after another, the commandments which would be specially applicable to each one of my hearers; but I pray the Holy Ghost to bring all things to your remembrance.

If there be a commandment which you do not relish, it ought to be a warning to you that there is something wrong in your heart that needs setting right.

Many of you do not love my Lord Jesus Christ. I have not preached to you, but

THAT VERY FACT SHOULD MAKE YOU THOUGHTFUL.

Go home and consider that the preacher said nothing to you because you do not love the Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore cannot keep His commandments. Write down in black and white—"*I do not love the*

Lord Jesus Christ. If it really be so, be honest enough to make a note of it, and think it over. If you love Jesus, you may joyfully write out, "I love the Lord Jesus. Oh for grace to love Him more!" But if you do not love Him it will be honest to put it upon record. Write it boldly: "*I do not love the Lord Jesus Christ.*" Look at it, and look again; and oh, may God the Holy Ghost lead you to repent of not loving Jesus, who is the altogether lovely One, and the great lover of men's souls! Oh that you may begin to love Him at once! Amen and Amen.

XXV.

WHITHER GOEST THOU?

TEXT—"*But He knoweth the way that I take: When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.*" *Job 23: 10.*

JOB'S APPEAL. — HIS CONFIDENCE. — BASED ON GOD'S KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WAY.—FOUR QUESTIONS—I. DO YOU KNOW YOUR WAY? WHERE IT LEADS? — HOW YOU ARE GOING? — AN INFERENCE FROM SILENCE.—ARE YOU DRIFTING? — A VAGABOND LUNATIC ARRESTED. — II. ARE YOU GLAD GOD KNOWS YOUR WAY? — CERTAIN THAT HE DOES KNOW. — EVEN WHEN THE MAN IS IN DOUBT. — III. HAVE YOU MET WITH TRIALS IN THE WAY? — TRIALS IN ALL WAYS. — COME FROM GOD. — AS TESTS. — WILL HAVE AN END. — IV. HAVE YOU CONFIDENCE IN GOD? — GOLD UNINJURED BY FIRE.

JOB could not understand the way of God with him; he was greatly perplexed. He could not find the Lord, with whom aforetime he constantly abode. He cries: "Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; on the left hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him; He hideth Himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him." But if Job knew not the way of the Lord, the Lord knew Job's way. It is a great comfort that when we cannot see the Lord, He sees us, and perceives the way that we take. It is not so important that we should understand what the Lord is doing as that the Lord should understand what we are doing, and that we should be impressed by the great fact that He does understand it. Our case may be quite beyond our own comprehension, but it

is all plain to Him, who seeth the end from the beginning.

Because God knew his way, Job turned from the unjust judgments of his unfeeling friends, and appealed to God Himself. He pleaded

IN THE SUPREME COURT,

where his case was known, and he refused the verdicts of erring men. He that doeth right seeketh the light; and as Job saw that the light was with God, he hastened to that light, that his deeds might be made manifest. Like a bird of the day, which begins to signal the return of the morning, he could sing when he stood in the light of God. He was glad that the Lord knew his way, his motive, and his desires; for from that truth he inferred that he would be helped in his trials, and brought safely through them. "When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

These words afford rich consolation to the saints, and if I were to use them for that purpose I should expect the Lord's people greatly to rejoice in the Lord, whose observant eye and gracious thoughts are always upon them. Our whole condition lies open to Him with whom we have to do. Though never understood by men, we are understood by our God. As the Son of God was known to the Father, though unknown to all the world, so are we hidden from the knowledge of men, but well known of the Most High.

I quit the design of comforting the people of God for the more presently pressing work of arousing the

unconverted. Their way is evil, and the end thereof is destruction. Oh that I could arouse them to a sense of their condition! To that end I shall ask four questions.

I. My hearer, I ask you, first:

DO YOU KNOW YOUR OWN WAY?

You have a way. There is a way which you have taken, chosen, selected for yourself: there is a way which you follow in desire, word and act. So far as your life is left to your own management, there is a way which you voluntarily take and willingly follow. Do you know what that way is? It is not every one who does know as much as that. It is a very simple question to put to you; but yet it is a very needful one to many; for many walk on as in a dream.

Do you know where you are going? "Of course," says one, "everybody knows where he is going." Do you know where *you* are going, and do you carefully consider your end? You are steaming across the deep sea of time into the main ocean of eternity: to what port are you steering? Whither goest thou, O man? The birds in the heaven know their time and place when they fly away in due season; but do you know whither you are speeding? Do you keep watch, looking ahead for the shore? What shore are you expecting to see? For what purpose are you living? What is the end and drift of your daily action? I fear that many in this vast congregation are not prepared to give a deliberate answer which will be pleasant to utter and to think upon. Is not this suspicious? If I were to go out to-morrow by the

sea, I should not walk on board a steamboat and then inquire, "Where are you going?" The captain would think me a crazy fellow if I embarked before I knew where the vessel was going. I first make up my mind where I will go, and then select a vessel which is likely to carry me there in comfort. I know of no ultimate abode of souls except the brightness of the Father's glory, or the darkness of Jehovah's wrath. Which of these will be your end? Which way are you intentionally going? What is it you are aiming at? Are you living for God? or are you so living that the result must be eternal banishment from His presence?

If you answer that question, allow me to put another: Do you know

HOW YOU ARE GOING?

In what strength are you pursuing your journey? If you feel able to say, "I am seeking that which is right and good," I then press the inquiry, In what strength are you pursuing it? Are you depending upon your own power, or have you received strength from on high? Do you rely on your own resolves and determinations, or have you received help from the Spirit of God? Remember, there are days in every life-voyage in which the storm-fiend puts all human power to a nonplus. Even in the fairest weather we are all too apt to run on rocks or quicksands; but the voyage of life is seldom altogether a pleasant one, and we must be prepared for tempests. Our own unaided strength will not endure the waves and the winds of the ocean of life; and if you are trusting to

yourself disaster will befall you. The Lord brings men to the desired haven; but, left to themselves, they are no match for the thousand dangers of their mysterious voyage. Is God with you? Has the Lord Jesus become your strength and your song? your Guide and Protector? If not, your weakness and folly will be made clear, before long, to your inevitable ruin. You may put on all steam and forge ahead in the teeth of the wind; but all in vain: you will never reach

THE FAIR HAVENS.

Are there any here who decline to answer my question? When a man confesses that he does not know where he is going, or what his business may be, the policeman concludes that he is probably going where he ought not to go, and has business on hand which is not what it should be. If you are afraid to consider your future, your fear is a bad omen. The tradesman who is afraid to look into his accounts will before long have them looked into for him by an officer from the Bankruptcy Court. He that dares not see his own face in the glass must be an ugly fellow; and you that dare not behold your own characters have bad characters. Not know where you are going! Ah me! do you wish to find yourselves in hell on a sudden? Do you prefer to go to a doctor who is known to say, "There is not much the matter: a little change and a dose of physic will soon put you all right"? Do you pay your guineas to be flattered? No: the man who is wise wants to know the truth, however alarming that truth may be.

Is anyone here compelled to say, "I have chosen the evil road"? Remember the Lord knows the way that you take. I am anxious that you should yourself know the truth about your condition and prospects. I wish every man here who is serving Satan to be aware that he is doing it. But there is this comfort to me, if it does not comfort you—that if you have chosen the wrong way, that choice need not stand. The grace of God can come in, and lead you at once to reverse your course.

But, my friend, *are you drifting?* Do you say, "I am not distinctly sailing for heaven, neither am I resolutely steering in the other direction. I do not quite know what to say of myself"? Are you drifting, then? Surely, you must be

DERELICT, IF NOT WATER-LOGGED;

and you will come to a total wreck before long. Yours is a dark prospect. Some time ago, I read in a paper of a gentleman being brought up before the magistrate. What was the charge against him? "Nothing very serious," you will say. He was found wandering in the fields. He was asked where he was going, and he said he was not going anywhere. He was asked where he came from, and he said he did not know. They asked him where his home was, and he said he had none. They brought him up for wandering as—what? *a dangerous lunatic!* The man who has no aim or object in life, but just wanders about anywhere or nowhere, acts like a dangerous lunatic, and assuredly is not morally sane. Do not say that you are drifting; it is a terrible answer, im-

plying grievous danger, and casting a suspicion upon your sanity. If you have reason, use it, and do not play the fool.

But can you say, "Yes, I am bound for the right port"? It may be that your accents are trembling with a holy fear; but, none the less, I am glad to hear you say as much. I rejoice if you say, "Christ commands me; I am trusting to His guidance; He is my way, my life, my end." Dear friend, I congratulate you. We will sail together, as God shall help us, under the convoy of our Lord Jesus, who is the Lord High Admiral of the sea of life. We will keep with His squadron till we cast anchor in the glassy sea. But now that you know your way, and are assured that you are on the right track, put on all steam. If we really are on the right way, let us press forward with all our powers; and may God help us, that we may win the prize! Answer this first question, and know of a surety where you are, and whither you are going.

II. Secondly, is it a comfort to you that God knows your way? Solemnly, I believe that one of

THE BEST TESTS OF CHARACTER

is our relation to the great truth of God's omniscience. If it startles you that God sees you, then you ought to be startled. Allow me to apply the test to you now, by asking what you think of the truth that the Lord knows you altogether. Remember, if your heart condemn you, God is greater than your heart, and knoweth all things; but if your heart

condemn you not, then have you confidence toward God.

Dear friend, it is quite certain that God does know the way that you take. The Hebrew may be read, "He knoweth the way that is in me;" from which I gather that the Lord not only knows our outward actions, but our inward feelings. He knows our likes and dislikes, our desires and our designs, our imaginations and tendencies. He knows not only what we do, but what we would do if we could. He knows which way we should go if the restraints of society and the fear of consequences were removed; and that, perhaps, is a more important proof of character than the actions of which we are guilty. God knows what you think of, what you wish for, what you are pleased with. He knows not only the surface-tint of your character, but the secret heart and core of it. The Lord knows you altogether. Think of that. Does it give you any joy, this morning, to think that the Lord thus reads all the secrets of your bosom? Whether you rejoice therein or not, so it is, and ever will be.

God knows your way, however falsely you may be represented by others. Those three men who had looked so askance upon Job accused him of hypocrisy, and of having practiced some secret evil; but Job could answer, "The Lord knoweth the way that I take." Are you the victim of slander? the Lord knows the truth. Though you have been sadly misunderstood, if not wilfully misrepresented by ungenerous persons, yet God knows all about you; and His

knowledge is of more importance than the opinions of dying men.

Another great mercy is, that God knows the way we take when we hardly know it ourselves. There are times with the true children of God when they cannot see their way, nor even take their bearings. It is not every saint that knows his longitude and latitude; nay, it is not every saint that is sure that he is a saint. We have to ask: "Is my repentance real? Is my faith true? Have I really passed from death to life? Am I the Lord's own?" I do not wish you to be in such a state: it is a pity that such a question should be possible; but I know full well that many sincere saints are often put to the question, and not altogether without reason. Herein is comfort: the Lord knows His children, and He knows the truth of their graces, the preciousness of their faith, the heavenliness of their life; for He is the Former, the Author of them all. He knows His own work, and cannot be deceived.

III. Thirdly, do you meet with

TRIALS IN THE WAY?

I anticipate your answer. Out of the many here present, not one has been quite free from sorrow. I think I hear one saying, "Sir, I have had more trouble since I have been a Christian than I ever had before." I met with such a case the other day: a man said to me, "I never went to a place of worship for many years, and I always seemed to prosper. At last I began to think of divine things, and I attended the house of God; but since then I have had nothing

but trouble." He did not murmur against God, but he did think it very strange. Friend, listen to me. These troubles are no token that you are in the wrong way. Job was in the right way, and the Lord knew it; and yet He suffered Job to be very fiercely tried.

Consider that there are trials in all ways. Even the road to destruction, broad as it is, has not a path in it which avoids trial. Some sinners go over hedge and ditch to hell. If a man resolves to be a worldling, he will not find that the paths of sin are paths of peace. The wicked may well be ill at ease; for God walks contrary to them because they walk contrary to Him. No man, be he on the throne, or on the woolsack, or up in a mill, or down in a coal-pit, can live without affliction. In a cottage near a wood there are troubles, as well as in the palace by the sea. We are born to trouble; if you look for a world without thorns and thistles, you will not find it here.

Trials are no evidence of being without God,

TRIALS COME FROM GOD.

Job says, "When *He* hath tried me." He sees God in his afflictions. The devil actually wrought the trouble; but the Lord not only permitted it, but He had a design in it. Without the divine concurrence, none of his afflictions could have happened. It was God that tried Job, and it is God that tries us. No trouble comes to us without divine permission. All the dogs of affliction are muzzled until God sets them free. Since every trial comes from God, afflictions are no evidence that you are out of God's way.

Besides, according to the text, these trials are tests: "When He hath *tried* me." The trials that came to Job were made to be proofs that the patriarch was real and sincere. Did not the enemy say: "Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face." The devil will have it that as dogs follow men for bones, so do we follow God for what we can get out of Him. The Lord lets the devil see that our love is not bought by temporal goods, that we are not mercenary followers, but loving children of the Lord, so that under dire suffering we exclaim, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." By the endurance of grief our sincerity is made manifest, and it is proven that we are not mere pretenders, but true heirs of God.

Once more upon this point: if you have met with troubles, remember *they will come to an end.* The holy man in our text says, "When He hath tried me." As much as to say, He will not always be doing it; there will come a time when He will have done trying me. Beloved, put a stout heart to a steep hill, and you will climb it before long. Put the ship in good trim for a storm; and though the winds may howl for a while, they will at length sob themselves asleep. There is a sea of glass for us after the sea of storms. Only have patience, and the end will come. Let your trials be evidence to you rather that you are

in the right than that you are in the wrong way; "for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" Because thou art bound for heaven thou wilt meet with storms.

IV. Fourthly:

HAVE YOU CONFIDENCE IN GOD

as to these storms? Can you say, in the language of the text, "When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold"? If you are really trusting in Jesus, if He is everything to you, you may say this confidently; for you will find it true to the letter. If you have really given yourself up to be saved by grace, do not hesitate to believe that you will be found safe at the last. I do not like people to come and trust Christ with a temporary faith, as though He could keep them for a day or two, but could not preserve them all their lives. Trust Christ for everlasting salvation: mark *"everlasting"!*

This confidence must be sustained by sincerity. If a man is not sure that he is sincere, he cannot have confidence in God. If you are a bit of gold and know it, the fire and you are friends. You will come forth out of it; for no fire will burn up gold. But if you suspect that you are some imitation metal, some mixture which glitters but is not gold, you will then hate fire and have no good word for it. You will proudly murmur at the divine dispensations. Why should you be put into the fire? Why should you be tried? You will kick against God's providence if you are a hypocrite, but if you are really sincere you will submit to the divine hand, and will not lie down in

despair. The motto of pure gold is, "I shall come forth." Make it your hopeful confidence

IN THE DAY OF TROUBLE.

Once more: He says, "I shall come forth *as gold*." But how does that come forth? It comes forth proved. It has been assayed, and is now warranted pure. So shall you be. After the trial you will be able to say, "Now I know that I fear God; now I know that God is with me, sustaining me; now I see that He has helped me, and I am sure that I am His." How does gold come forth? It comes forth purified. A lump of ore may not be so big as when it went into the fire, but it is quite as precious. There is quite as much gold in it now as there was at first. What has gone? Nothing but that which is best gone. The dross has gone, but all the gold is there. O child of God, you may decrease in bulk, but not in bullion!

Once more: how does gold come forth from the furnace? It comes forth ready for use. Now the goldsmith may take it, and make what he pleases of it. It has been through the fire, and the dross has been got away from it, and it is fit for his use. So, beloved, if you are on the way to heaven, and you meet with difficulties, they will bring you preparation for higher service; you will be a better and more useful man; you will be a woman whom God can more fully use to comfort others. Spiritual afflictions are heavenly promotions. You are

GOING A RANK HIGHER,

God is putting another stripe upon your arm. You

were only a corporal, but now He is making a sergeant of you. Be not discouraged. You that have set out for heaven this morning, do not go back because you get a rainy day when you start. Do not be like Pliable. When he got to the Slough of Despond, and tumbled in, all he did was to struggle to get out on the side nearest home. He said, "If I may only once get out of this bog, you may have that grand city for yourself for me." Come, be like Christian, who, though he did sink, always kept his face in the right way, and always turned his back to the City of Destruction. "No," he said, "if I sink in deep mire where there is no standing, I will go down with my eyes toward the hills whence cometh my help." May the Lord so bless you, for He knows the way you take! and when He hath tried you, He will bring you forth as gold. Amen.

XXVI.

HOW TO PLEASE GOD.

TEXT—"*But without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.*" *Heb. 11:6.*

THE ACHIEVEMENT POSSIBLE.—ITS RESULT.—I. FAITH ESSENTIAL.—NO COMMUNION POSSIBLE WITHOUT IT.—NOR CONFIDENCE.—NOR COMMON MEETING-GROUND.—NOR PROSPECT OF LOVE.—VARIANCE ON MANY POINTS.—II. TWO ESSENTIAL POINTS OF FAITH.—BELIEF IN THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.—IN HIS BEING A REWARDER.—III. PRACTICAL LESSONS.—WITH FAITH IT IS POSSIBLE TO PLEASE GOD.—SHOULD BE THE CHIEF OBJECT IN LIFE.—THE COMING CONTINUAL.—DEATH ONLY COMING CLOSER.—A FEARFUL THING TO BE WITHOUT FAITH.

MEN have lived who have pleased God: Enoch was one of them, but he was not the only one. In all ages certain persons have been well-pleasing to God, and their walk in life has been such as was His delight. It should be the aim of every one of us to please God. The thing is possible, notwithstanding all our imperfections and infirmities: let us aim at it in the power of the Holy Ghost. What has been wrought in one man may be wrought in another. We, too, may be well-pleasing unto God; therefore let us seek after it with hopefulness. As Enoch, in a darker age, was pleasing to Him, why should not we, upon whom the Gospel day has dawned? God grant us to find grace in His sight!

If we please God we shall have realized the object of our being. It is written concerning all things, "For His pleasure they are and were created;" and we miss the end of creation if we are not pleasing to the Lord. To fulfil God's end in our creation is to obtain the highest joy. If we are pleasing to God, although we shall not escape trial, for even the highest qualities must be tested, yet we shall find great peace and special happiness. He is not an unhappy man who is pleasing to God: God hath blessed him, yea, and he shall be blessed. By pleasing God we shall become the means of good to others: our example will rebuke and stimulate; our peace will convince and invite. Being himself well pleasing to God, the godly man will teach transgressors God's way, and sinners shall be converted unto Him. I therefore, without the slightest hesitancy, set it before you as a thing to be desired by us all, that we should win this testimony—that we are pleasing God.

I. First, then, the apostle asserts that

FAITH IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL

to the pleasing of God. Take, as a key-word, the strong word "*impossible.*" "Without faith it is impossible to please God." He does not say it is difficult, or so needful that without it success is barely possible; but, point-blank, he declares it to be "*impossible.*" For, first, without faith there is no capacity for communion with God at all. The things of God are spiritual and invisible: without faith we cannot recognize such things, but must be dead to them. Faith is the eye which sees; but without that eye we

are blind, and can have no fellowship with God in those sacred truths which only faith can perceive. Faith is the hand of the soul, and without it we have no grasp of eternal things. If I were to mention all the images by which faith is set forth, each one would help you to see that you must have faith in order to know God and enter into converse with Him. It is only by faith that we can recognize God, approach Him, speak to Him, hear Him, feel His presence, and be delighted with His perfections.

Again, without faith the man himself is not pleasing to God. We read, "Without faith it is impossible to please God;" but the Revision has it better: "Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto God." The way of acceptance described in Scripture is, first, the man is accepted, and then what that man does is accepted. It is written: "And he shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." First, God is pleased with the person, and then with the gift, or the work. The unaccepted person offers of necessity an unacceptable sacrifice. If a man be your enemy, you will not value a present which he sends you. As the man is, such is his work. The stream is of the nature of the spring from which it flows. He who is a rebel, outlawed and proclaimed, cannot gratify his prince by any fashion of service;

HE MUST FIRST SUBMIT

himself to the law. All the actions of rebels are acts done in rebellion. We must first be reconciled to God, or it is a mockery to bring an offering to His

altar. Faith in Christ makes a total change in our position towards God—we who were enemies are reconciled; and from this comes towards God a distinct change in the nature of all our actions: imperfect though they be, they spring from a loyal heart, and they are pleasing to God.

Remember that, in human associations, want of confidence would prevent a man's being well-pleasing to another. If a man has no confidence in you, you can have no pleasure in him. If you had a servant in your house who always suspected your every action, and believed in nothing that you said or did, but put a wrong construction upon everything, it would make the house very miserable, and you would be well rid of such an inmate. It is clear that want of confidence would destroy any pleasure which one man might have in another. When the creature dares to doubt his Creator, how can the Creator be pleased?

Note again: unbelief takes away the common ground upon which God and man can meet. Two persons who are pleasant to one another must have certain common views and objects. If you and I believe in God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ, we have

A COMMON GROUND

of sympathy with God; but if not, we are not in harmony. How can two walk together except they be agreed? According to *the well-worn fable*, two persons who are totally different in their pursuits cannot well live together: the fuller and the charcoal-burner

were obliged to part; for whatever the fuller had made white, the collier blackened with his finger. If differing pursuits divide, much more will differing feelings upon a vital point. It is Jesus whom Jehovah delights to honor; and if you will not even trust Jesus with your soul's salvation, you grieve the heart of God, and He can have no pleasure in you.

Assuredly, again, want of faith destroys all prospect of love. Although we may not perhaps see it, there lies at the bottom of all love a belief in the object loved, as to its loveliness, its merit, or its capacity to make us happy. If I do not believe in a person, I cannot love him. If I cannot trust God, I cannot love Him. If I do not believe that He loves me, I shall feel but slight emotions of love to Him. If I refuse to see anything in the greatest display of His love, if I do not value the gift of His dear Son, then I cannot love Him. But love on our part is essential to our pleasing God: how can He be pleased with an unloving heart?

Again, want of faith will create positive variance on many points. Note a few. If I trust God, and believe in Him, I shall submit myself to His will; even when it becomes very painful to me I shall say, "It is the Lord: let Him do what seemeth Him good." But if I do not believe that He is God, and that He is aiming at my good, then I shall resent His chastisements, and shall kick against His will. What He wills me to suffer, I shall not be willing to suffer; but I shall rebel, and murmur, and proudly accuse my Maker of injustice, or want of love. I shall be in a rebellious

state toward Him, and then He cannot have pleasure in me.

Without faith, moreover, I get to be

AT VARIANCE WITH GOD

in another way; for inasmuch as I desire to be saved, I shall seek salvation in my own way, and go about to establish a righteousness of my own. Whatever it may be, whether it be by ceremonies, or by good works, or by feelings, or what not, I shall, in some way or other, set up a way of salvation other than that which God has appointed through Christ Jesus. If you are laboring to be saved in one way, while God declares that through His Son is the only way of salvation, you are acting in distinct opposition to the Lord in a matter which does not admit of any compromise. He who has no faith seeks salvation by a way that is derogatory to the Lord, and it is impossible for him to please God.

Let me conclude this point by asking, By what means can we hope to please God, apart from faith in Him? By keeping all the commandments? Alas! you have not done so. You have already broken those commands; and what is more, you still break them, and are in a chronic state of disobedience. If you do not believe in Him you are

NOT OBEDIENT TO HIM;

for true obedience commands the understanding as well as every other power and faculty. We are bound to obey with the mind by believing, as well as with the hand by acting. The spiritual part of our being

is in revolt against God until we believe; and, while the very life and glory of our being is in revolt, how can we please God?

But what will you bring to the Lord wherewith to please Him? Do you propose to bribe Him with your money? Surely you are not so foolish! Is the Lord to be bought with a row of almshouses, or a chapel, or a cathedral? To most of you it would be impossible to try the plan for lack of means; but if you were wealthy enough to lavish gold out of the bag, would this please Him? Truly, you can assist in an ornate worship, or build a gorgeous church, or embroider the furniture of an altar, or emblazon the windows of a church. But are you so weak as to believe that such trifles as these can cause any delight to the mind of the Infinite? It is not this that He asks of you, but to walk humbly with Him, never daring arrogantly to doubt His truth and mistrust His faithfulness. Go not about by a thousand inventions to aim at what you will never compass, but believe your God, and be established. So much upon that painful point. Remember the impossibility of pleasing the Lord without faith, and do not dash your ship upon this iron-bound coast.

II. Now, secondly the apostle mentions

TWO ESSENTIAL POINTS

of faith. He begins by saying, "He that cometh to God must believe that He is." Note the key-word "*must:*" it is an immovable, insatiable necessity. Before we can walk with God, it is clear that we must come to God. Naturally, we are at a distance from Him, and

we must end that distance by coming to Him, or else we cannot walk with Him, nor be pleasing to Him. That we may come to Him, we must first believe that there is a God to come to. More; we must not only believe that there is a God — for only a fool doubts *that:* "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" — but we must believe that Jehovah is God, and God alone. This was Enoch's faith; he believed that Jehovah was the living and true God. You are to believe, and must believe in order to be pleasing with God, that He is God, that He is the only God, and that there can be none other than He. You must also accept Jehovah as He reveals Himself. You are not to have a God of your own making, nor a God reasoned out, but a God such as He has been pleased to reveal Himself to you. Believe that Jehovah is, whoever else may not be.

But the devils believe and tremble, and yet they are not pleasing to God, for more is wanted. Believe that God *is* in reference to yourself: that He has to do with your life, and your ways. Many believe that there is a hazy, imaginary power which they call God; but they never think of Him as a person, nor do they suspect that He thinks of them, or that His existence is of any consequence to them one way or another. Believe that God *is* as truly as you are; and let Him be real to you. Let the consideration of Him enter into everything that concerns you. Believe that He is approachable by yourself, and is to be pleased or displeased by you. Believe in Him as you believe in your wife or your child whom

you try to please. Believe in God beyond everything, that "He is" in a sense more sure than that in which any one else exists. Believe that He is to be approached, to be realized, to be, in fact, the great practical factor of your life. Hold this as the primary truth, that God is most influential upon you; and that it is your business to come to Him.

Yet all this would be nothing without the second point. We must believe that "He is

THE REWARDER

of them that diligently seek Him." How do we *seek Him*, then? Well, we seek Him, first, when we begin by prayer, by trusting to Jesus, and by calling upon the sacred name, to seek salvation. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." That is a grand promise, and it teaches how we come to God; namely, by calling upon His name. Afterwards we seek God by aiming at His glory, by making Him the great object for which we live. One man seeks money, another seeks reputation, another seeks pleasure; but he that is pleasing to God seeks God as His object and end. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

The Lord is "a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." He, then, that would please God must first believe that He is; and then dedicating himself to God, must be firmly assured that this is the right, the wise, the prudent, thing to do. Be certain that to serve God is in itself gain: it is wealth to be holy; it is happiness to be pleasing to God. We cannot

conceive that the heavenly Father sees, without pleasure, a man struggling against sin, battling against evil, enduring sorrow contentedly through a simple faith, and laboring daily to draw nearer and nearer to Him. But all this hangs upon faith. Without faith there is no coming to God who is, and no seeking of God who is a rewarder; and therefore without faith it is impossible to please God.

III. We will now gather a few lessons from what the apostle has taught us. First, then, the apostle teaches us here by implication that God is pleased with those that have faith. The negative is often the plainest way of suggesting the positive. If we are so carefully warned that without faith it is impossible to please God, we infer that

WITH FAITH IT IS POSSIBLE

to please God. If you believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him; if you are willing to believe all that He teaches you because He teaches it, and are really a believer in Himself, and in all that He is pleased to reveal, then are you pleasing to Him. He that believes in God believes in all the words that God speaks, and he surrenders himself to all that God does; and such a man must be pleasing to God. When the prodigal said, "In my father's house there is bread enough and to spare," he believed in his father's power to supply all his needs. When he thought in his heart that his father would receive him, then he said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father I have sinned." You must have so much belief in God as to believe Him

to have the heart of a father towards you, or you will never come back to Him; but when you begin to trust your God your face is already towards the heavenly home and before long your head will be in your Father's bosom.

Learn, next, that those who have faith make it the great object of their life to please God. Am I speaking the truth? Will each one ask whether it is true about himself? Do I, as a believer, live to please God? We need personal heart-searching on this point. The believer in the invisible God delights to act as in His sight, and in secret to serve Him. I take a choice pleasure in rendering to my God a service unknown to others, not done for the sake of my fellows, but distinctly that I may do something for my Lord's own self. It is sweet to give or do simply to please *Him*, without respect to the public eye. It is ennobling to feel that you have

ONLY ONE MASTER,

and that you live to please *Him*, even God. To please men is poor work. To live to follow everybody's whim is slavery. If you let one man pull you by the ear in his direction, another will tug at you from another direction, and *you will have very long ears before long*. Happy is he who, pleasing God, feels that he has risen above seeking to please men. It is grand to say, "This is what God would have me do, and I will do it in happy fellowship with others, or alone by myself, as the case may be; but do it I must." This gives a man backbone, and at the same time removes the selfishness which is greedy of popular applause.

It is a grand thing to be no longer looking for cheer, but to be distinctly looking up for it.

Note, next, the apostle teaches us here that they that have faith in God are

ALWAYS COMING

to God; for he speaks of the believer as "He that cometh to God." If you once learn to believe God, and to please Him, you are coming to Him day by day. You not only come to Him, and go away from Him, as in acts of prayer and praise, but you are always coming; your life is a march towards Him. The way of the believer is toward God; by his faith he comes ever nearer and yet nearer to the eternal throne. What is his reward? Why, He that sitteth on the throne will say, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Come! Come on! You have been coming; keep on coming forever. There is a gentle, constant, perpetual progress of the believer's heart and mind nearer and closer to God.

The next lesson is one I have already spoken of: God will see that those who practice faith in Him shall have a reward. I say, God will see to it, for the text says, "*He is* a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Here we may get but scant reward from those whom we benefit; indeed, they usually return us base ingratitude. Joseph was a faithful servant to Potiphar; but Potiphar put him in prison on a groundless charge. Joseph helped the butler, and interpreted his dream, yet he remembered not Joseph,

but forgat him. You may not reckon upon due returns from your fellow-men, or you will be disappointed. Expect little from men and much from God, for He is a rewarder.

The last lesson we gather from it is this:

THOSE WHO HAVE NO FAITH

are in a fearful case. I speak not of the heathen, but of unbelievers who reject the Gospel. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Some of you are always fashioning fresh nets of doubt for your own entanglement. You invent snares for your own feet, and are greedy to lay more and more of them. You are mariners who seek the rocks, soldiers who court the point of the bayonet. It is an unprofitable business. Practically, morally, mentally, spiritually, doubting is an evil trade. You are like a smith wearing out his arm in making chains with which to bind himself. Doubt is sterile, a desert without water. Its progress is the decay of comfort, the death of peace. "Believe!" is the word which speaks life into a man; but doubt nails down his coffin.

If thou canst believe, O guilty one, that Jesus Christ bore the guilt of sin upon the cross, and by His death has made atonement to the insulted government of God; if thou canst so believe in Him as to cast thyself just as thou art at His dear feet, thou shalt be pleasing to God. I entreat thee to look up and see the pierced hands and feet and side of the dear Redeemer, and read eternal mercy there; read full forgiveness there, and then go thou away in peace, for thou art well-pleasing to God. The sinner

who believes God's testimony concerning His Son has begun to please Him, and is himself well-pleasing to the Lord. Oh that you would now trust Him who justifieth the ungodly and passeth by the iniquities of sinful men! He will receive you graciously and love you freely. Oh, come to Him, for He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. God help you to do so at once. But without faith you cannot please Him. Do what you may, feel what you like, you will labor as in the very fire, and nothing will come of it but eternal despair. The Lord help you to believe and live! Amen.

The Life of C. H. Spurgeon.

THE LIFE

OF

C. H. SPURGEON.

MEN who move great masses of their fellows, by their force of character and intellectual power, are always interesting subjects of study. It is given to few men to wield such an influence as that wielded by Charles Haddon Spurgeon. He is undoubtedly the greatest of living preachers. His success is a phenomenon. Talmage may excel him in rhetorical brilliancy, Farrar in literary elegance, John Hall in dignity and Philips Brooks in stately symmetry, but none of these attains the spiritual results that mark the ministry of Spurgeon. He is the most conspicuous modern example of apostolic zeal, simplicity and spiritual power. Firm in his faith, clear in his convictions, bold in his utterance and marvellous in his power of practical application, he succeeds in rousing the consciences of men, and moving them to accept Christ as their Saviour. After all, a man's ministry is properly estimated by the results achieved in the conversion of sinners. Judged by that standard, who can take the palm from Spurgeon?

But he is not only great as a preacher of the Gospel. He is remarkable as an organizer. His

executive ability is conspicuous. The organization of his great church with its numerous branches, his Pastor's College and his Orphan Home, as we shall see, all bear testimony to his practical business talent as well as to his Christian faith. A brief sketch of his life may therefore be welcome to the readers of this volume of sermons.

Mr. Spurgeon springs from a pious and loyal ancestry. His great-grandfather was contemporary with the opening portion of the reign of King George III. From that day to the present, there has always been some one of the Spurgeon family to stand before God in the sanctuary, as a minister of the New Testament. His father, the Rev. John Spurgeon, who was born in 1811, has been a Congregational minister of great usefulness, and his mother was a woman of sincere piety and humility. She trained their children with prayerful solicitude, and was rewarded by seeing every one of them gathered into the fold of Christ. Two of her sons occupy prominent pulpits in the British Metropolis, and a daughter is the wife of a minister of the Gospel. Mrs. Spurgeon said to her son Charles one day, after he had been converted and had joined the Baptist Church, "Ah, Charley, I have often prayed that you might be saved, but never that you should become a Baptist." She received for a reply: "God has answered your prayer, mother, with His usual bounty, and given you more than you asked." No doubt the influence of this godly mother is a large factor in the success of the son.

Her husband being a non-conformist minister and

much away from home, often felt solicitous for the training of the children, but she was a true helpmeet and equal to her task. Returning one day after an absence of some time, Mr. Spurgeon says: "I returned home feeling that while I was toiling for others, I might be neglecting my own children, I opened the door and was surprised to find none of the children about the hall. Going quietly up stairs, I heard my wife's voice. She was praying with the children; I heard her pray for them by name, one by one. She came to Charles and specially prayed for him, for he was of a high spirit and a daring temper. I listened till she had ended her prayer, and I felt and said, 'Lord, I will go on with Thy work; the children will be cared for'."

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was born at Kelvedon, a village in Essex, on June 19, 1834. He was a bright, brainy lad, full of animal spirits. He spent a large part of his youthful years at Stambourne with his grandparents, where he developed a love for books, such as Giant Despair, Pilgrim's Progress, Robinson Crusoe, and the like, displaying a precocity which attracted general attention. Quite early in life he also gave indications of that boldness and decision which marked his mature years.

It is related of him that before he was six years old, seeing a person who made a profession of religion in the company of others of doubtful character, he astonished the big man by asking: "What doest thou *here*, Elijah?"

At ten years of age, an event occurred which had an important bearing upon his life. While staying at

his grandfather's, Rev. Richard Knill visited the family, and held a missionary meeting in the place. Mr. Knill became interested in the boy upon hearing him read a passage of Scripture at family worship. They had several conversations, and when Mr. Knill was about to leave he called the family together, and taking Charley on his knees said:

"I feel a solemn presentiment that this child will preach the Gospel to thousands and God will bless him to many souls. So sure I am of this that I should like him to promise me, that when my little man preaches in Rowland Hillis Chapel, as he will one day, he will give out the hymn:

'God moves in a mysterious way,'" etc.

The promise was made and never forgotten. Charles committed the hymn to memory. Years afterward he said: "The prophetic declaration is fulfilled. When I had the privilege of preaching the Word of Life in Surrey Chapel, and also when I preached in Mr. Hill's first pulpit at Wooten-Edge, the hymn was sung in both places." No doubt Mr. Knill's words helped to bring about their own fulfillment. Mr. Spurgeon himself regards it so. He says: "I believed Mr. Knill's words, and looked forward to the time when I should preach the Word."

The boy spent four years at a school in Colchester studying Greek, Latin and French. He was an industrious and apt student, carrying off the prizes in all competitions. In 1849 he went to New Market, where, under the care of Mr. Swindell he practiced self-denial, in trying to serve God. At this time he

passed through a severe mental conflict with infidelity. He says of it:

"I too have been like the free-thinker. There was an evil hour, when I slipped the anchor of my faith; I cut the cable of my belief; I no longer moored myself hard by the coast of Revelation. I allowed myself to drift like a vessel before the wind and thus started on the voyage of infidelity. I said to Reason, be thou my captain; I said to my own brain, be thou my rudder; and I started on my mad voyage. Thank God, it is all over now; but I will tell you its brief history: it was one hurried sailing over the tempestuous ocean of free-thought." But he soon conquered these doubts.

HIS CONVERSION.

This occurred in 1850, early in the month of January, in a Primitive Methodist Chapel. It will be best to relate this important occurrence in his own language, for he frequently refers to it in his sermons. He says:

"I will tell you how I myself was brought to the knowledge of this truth. It may happen the telling of that may bring some one else to Christ. It pleased God in my childhood to convince me of sin. I lived a miserable creature, finding no hope, no comfort, thinking that surely God would never save me. At last the worst came to the worst — I was miserable; I could scarcely do anything. My heart was broken in pieces. Six months did I pray, prayed agonizingly with all my heart, and never had an answer. I resolved that, in the town where I lived, I would visit every place of worship, in order to find out the way of salvation. I felt I was willing to do anything, and

be anything, if God would only forgive me. I set off, and went to all places of worship, and though I dearly venerate the men that occupy those pulpits now, and I did so then, I am bound to say that I never heard them once fully preach the Gospel. I mean by that, that they preached truth, great truths, many good truths that were fitting to many of their congregation — spiritually-minded people; but what I wanted to know was: How can I get my sins forgiven? And they never once told me that. I wanted to hear how a poor sinner, under a sense of sin, might find peace with God; and when I went I heard a sermon on 'Be not deceived, God is not mocked,' which cut me up worse, but did not say how I might escape. I went another day, and the text was something about the glories of the righteous; nothing for poor me. I was something like a dog under the table, not allowed to eat the children's food. I went time after time, and I can honestly say, I don't know that I ever went without prayer to God, and I am sure that there was not a more attentive hearer in all the place than myself, for I panted and longed to understand how I might be saved. At last one snowy day it snowed so much I could not go to the place I had determined to go to, and I was obliged to stop on the road; and it was a blessed stop to me. I found rather an obscure street, and turned down a court, and there was a little chapel. I wanted to go somewhere, but I did not know this place. It was a Primitive Methodists' chapel. I had heard of these people from many, how they sang so loudly that they made people's heads ache; but that did not matter. I wanted to know how I might be saved, and if they made my head ache ever so much I did not care. So sitting down, the services went on, but no minister came. At last a very thin-looking man came into the pulpit and

opened his Bible and read these words: 'Look unto me, and ye be saved, all the ends of the earth.' Just setting his eyes upon me, as if he knew me all by heart, he said: 'Young man, you are in trouble.' Well, I was, sure enough. Says he, 'You will never get out of it unless you look to Christ.' And then lifting up his hands, he cried out, as only, I think, a Primitive Methodist could do, 'Look, look, look! It is only *look*.' I saw at once the way of salvation. Oh, how I did leap for joy at that moment! I know not what else he said; I did not take much notice of it, I was so possessed with that one thought. Like as when the brazen serpent was lifted up, they only looked and were healed. I had been waiting to do fifty things, but when I heard this word 'Look,' what a charming word it seemed to me! Oh, I looked until I could almost have looked my eyes away, and in heaven I will look on still in my joy unutterable. I now think I am bound never to preach a sermon without preaching to sinners. I do think that a minister who can preach a sermon without addressing sinners does not know how to preach."

He knew the day and the very hour, when this great change was wrought in his soul. He says: "I shall never forget that day, while memory holds its place; nor can I help repeating this text whenever I remember that hour when I was turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God."

Spurgeon at once indentified himself with the Baptist Church at Cambridge, and soon found opportunity for exercising in capacities suited to his talent. Already in 1851, when he was but 16 years old, he preached his first sermon, in the village of Taversham, about four miles from Cambridge. His text

was 1. Pet. 2. 7: "Unto you therefore, which believe, He is precious." The sermon made a good impression and gave promise of a brilliant future, although he had had no time to prepare for it, having accompanied another young brother who was expected to preach, but declined. He found so much encouragement and delight in this service, that he soon arranged to preach somewhere each evening, after his studies for the day were over. These services were held in the villages about Cambridge, sometimes in cottages, again in chapels, and often on the open common. The people at Waterbeach were so well pleased with the boy-preacher that they invited him to become their pastor. The membership increased in a few months from forty to nearly a hundred.

In 1854 he was called to preach in London. The New Park-Street Baptist Church, Southwark, was without a pastor; it was in a state of decay; the membership was scattered; its condition was deplorable, and the deacons were despondent. One of them happened to hear young Spurgeon deliver an address at a Union Sunday-School anniversary in Cambridge, and was so impressed with the youthful speaker, that in a few weeks Spurgeon received an invitation to preach a sermon in the New Park-Street Baptist Chapel. The people were astonished. After preaching for them several Sundays, they gave him a call to become their pastor. This was a surprise to him: New Park-Street was one of the most ancient Baptist churches in London, and had an illustrious roll of names among its former pastors. At length

the invitation was accepted, and Mr. Spurgeon began his work in the metropolis in April 1854. Before three months had expired, the fame of the New Park-Street preacher had spread over the city, and crowds flocked to hear him preach. The newspapers even were puzzled, and asked, "Who is this Spurgeon?" Thousands waited upon his ministry; he had the ear of the multitude. Nor did this prove to be a mere passing sensation. Spurgeon was no comet blazing suddenly, and waning as suddenly, but a fixed star of the first magnitude among the great preachers of the British metropolis, who has the attention of the world to-day, after more than thirty years.

Hardly had the young man entered upon his metropolitan pastorate, when the memorable Summer of 1854 brought to London that awful scourge, Asiatic cholera. The black flag stretched across the streets was a signal everywhere visible. Mr. Spurgeon's powers were severely taxed, waiting on the sick, visiting the dying and administering consolation to the bereaved. The scourge made sad inroads on the membership of his church, and he came near breaking down under the strain. But he suffered no harm, for he trusted God implicitly.

In the Autumn of that year he preached a harvest sermon from the words, "Is it not wheat harvest to-day?" The sermon attracted special attention. During the week following it was printed under the title "Harvest Time", and had a large sale. The same publisher then printed another of his sermons. The public demand for these sermons was great, and

gradually led to more frequent publications of them, which increased his popularity. — With the year 1855 he made arrangements with a publisher, a member of his church, to publish one sermon each week. Since that time the sermons of Spurgeon have appeared regularly, week after week, for more than thirty years without interruption, enjoying an immense circulation and being blessed to thousands all over the world. Wherever the English language is spoken, and indeed throughout Christendom, Spurgeon's name is a household word.

Before a year was up, his Chapel had to be enlarged, to accommodate the thousands who flocked to hear "this round-faced country youth". Upon the occasion of his first visit to Scotland in 1855, twelve thousand people crowded into an open common at Hackney to hear him.

January 8th, 1856, Mr. Spurgeon was married to Miss Susanna Thompson, daughter of Mr. Robert Thompson of Falcon Square, London. Their married life has been happy. They have two sons, Charles and Thomas, both ministers. His wife has been a sympathetic helpmeet to him in his abundant labors. Although she has been a constant sufferer and a confirmed invalid, she has done a great work. From her quiet chamber she has personally directed many thousands of books to pastors whose libraries were in need. She has created a book fund from which grants of books are made to needy pastors of all evangelical denominations who are actually in charge of a work, who are wholly devoted to the

ministry and whose income does not exceed $750 per annum. Besides this, she superintends a private mission which sends clothing to destitute women and children. Thus she carries forward with a woman's tact well planned schemes of benevolence, and yet all is done so quietly that multitudes hear nothing of it.

Even the enlargement of his church was not long sufficient, and it was found necessary to procure the largest available auditorium in the metropolis. This was the Royal Surrey Gardens Music Hall. In that vast audience room Mr. Spurgeon began preaching in October, 1856, and continued every Sabbath morning until the great Metropolitan Tabernacle was completed. The foundation stone of the Tabernacle was laid August 16, 1859 by Sir Samuel Morton Peto. The opening service was held in it March 25, 1861 Though it cost $156,660, it was dedicated free of debt. It is 146 feet long, 81 feet broad, 62 feet high and provides room for 5000 people. Since then various improvements have been made, so that now it seats 5,500 persons, with standing-room for 1,000 more, making a total capacity of 6,500. And yet it has always been filled — because the pulpit is always filled. The membership of the church rapidly increased after the occupancy of the great Church edifice. In ten years 3,569 persons were received into church fellowship by the pastor.

Mr. Spurgeon's preaching has been listened to, not only by the "common people" who indeed hear him gladly, but by many members of the aristocratic cir-

cle, and by persons of note. Among these may be mentioned Lord Chief Justice Campbell, Earl of Shaftesbury, Florence Nightingale, Dr. David Livingstone, and in recent years Mr. Gladstone has been a frequent attendant at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Gladstone speaks glowingly of Spurgeon as "the last of the Puritans." Livingstone, the great explorer of the Dark Continent declares after hearing Spurgeon preach on one occasion, that no religious service he ever attended had so deeply impressed his mind as that Sunday morning service in Spurgeon's church. The memory of it, he added, would afford him consolation when he should again have buried himself in the wilds of Africa.

The great preacher is thus described:

He is of medium height, quite stout, has a round face, not a high forehead, and his dark hair is parted in the middle. His appearance in the pulpit is interesting, rather than commanding. His figure is awkward, his manners plain; his face is admitted to be heavy except when illuminated by a smile. His voice is the one instrument of his marvellous power over the minds and hearts of his hearers. His voice is rich, powerful, melodious and under perfect control. Twelve thousand have distinctly heard every sentence he uttered in the open air, and his voice carried his burning words to twenty thousand people in Crystal Palace. A critic says:

"As soon as he commences to speak, tones of richest melody are heard. A voice, full, sweet, and musical, falls on every ear, and awakens agreeable emo-

tions in every soul in which there is a sympathy for sounds. That most excellent voice is under perfect control, and can thunder, or whisper at the wish of its possessor. Then there is poetry in every feature, and every movement, as well as music in the voice. The countenance speaks, the entire form sympathizes. The action is in complete unison with the sentiments, and the eye listens scarcely less than the ear to the sweet flowing oratory. To the influence of this powerful voice he adds that of a manner characterized by great freedom and fearlessness, intensely earnest and strikingly natural. When to these we add thrilling description, touching anecdote, sparkling wit, startling episode, striking similes, all used to illustrate and enforce the truths of the Bible, we have a combination of elements which must make up a preacher of wonderful attraction and of marvellous power."

SPURGEON AT HOME.

Rev. Dr. Theodore L. Cuyler writing from London, under date of June 25, (1889,) gives the following graphic description of Mr. Spurgeon and his home life:

"During every visit to London it has been my privilege to pass a Saturday afternoon with Mr. Spurgeon, for that is his holiday. Accordingly, Mr. Hall and myself drove down to his beautiful villa of 'Westwood,' near Sydenham, Crystal Palace. A 'damsel Rhoda' at the porter's lodge opened the gate, and we passed up a shaded avenue to the house. It is a spacious mansion, embowered in foliage and flowers and verdant lawns; and this lovely home, with its

surrounding drives, is his one luxury and recreation. He attends no dinner parties or junketings of any kind, joins in no public amusements, but gives himself entirely to his home, his books, and his pulpit. On Sabbath mornings he drives in—six miles—to his Tabernacle, preaches twice; he conducts the church prayer-meeting on Monday evening, end lectures to two or three thousand people on Thursday evening. He gave us a very racy account of his last prayer-meeting, which in freedom of speech and fervency of devotion would be a model for all our prayer-meetings; a half dozen persons were struggling at once to 'get, the floor,' and no prayer lasted more than a minute.

"We found Mr. Spurgeon as stout, as genial, as unique, and as merry-hearted as ever. He took us out through his lovely garden and lawn, and then through a gate into his 'farm.' His own grounds cover twelve acres, and he rents twenty acres more for farming purposes. His good wife keeps a dozen cows, and the proceeds of her dairy support a city missionary. We strolled off into a meadow where the mowers were busy in hay-making, and throwing ourselves down on a pile of the fragrant hay, we played boy, and told stories. As I looked at Mr. Spurgeon in his playful boyishness, it was not easy to believe that our merry companion was the most extraordinary preacher of modern times—the wonderful herald of salvation, whose trumpet of truth is heard throughout all lands. Let us thank God that neither he nor Newman Hall have ever lowered the standard of the Cross by a single inch. After our stroll through the fields and the gardens and the graperies, where our host gave us a botanical talk, we came in to tea, and then adjourned to the spacious library for family worship. It was a joint service, and it was worth a

journey to England to listen to my beloved brother's sweet and rich and characteristic prayer. He conversed with God as a child talks with a father. At six o'clock we bade him farewell, and he opened his Bible, and according to his usual custom, selected his text, and laid out the plan of his sermon. This he usually does within an hour."

Spurgeon's manner of pulpit preparation may not be uninteresting to our readers, as described recently by his son.

"On Saturday night after six o'clock he prepares his two sermons for the following Sunday; he has not, probably, decided on the subjects until that time. He never writes a sermon, but simply makes a few notes upon a sheet of note paper. On Monday he revises his Sunday morning sermon, which has been taken down in shorthand and transcribed. Tuesday and Wednesday he is generally away somewhere preaching, besides attending to his literary work in the daytime. Thursday is service night, generally preceded by inquirers' meeting, when he talks with those about to join the church. Friday he attends the Preachers' College. Saturday morning he attends to correspondence, and in the afternoon has a reception for visitors. There are two church services on Sunday, morning and evening, each of which is attended by 6000 persons. My father believes in extemporaneous preaching; his expression is that preachers should prepare themselves as much as possible, then lay aside the writing, and speak straight out. He does not believe in reading sermons, but in natural talking. He thinks that young preachers can cultivate this gift. Many of them, probably, have the gift and it is lying dormant; it might become almost extinct, whereas if they cultivate it it grows stronger."

This gives also an insight into the vast amount of work Pastor Spurgeon does outside his great pulpit efforts. His church is, in fact, the nucleus and centre of a great system of benevolent, missionary and evangelistic enterprises. We have only room to mention the more important of these sub-organizations, all of which are under his general supervision.

a) The Colportage Association, organized in 1866.

b) The Tabernacle Building Fund; capital $25,000.

c) Mrs. Spurgeon's Book Fund.

d) Mr. Oncken's German Mission, which supports two missionaries in Germany.

e) Mr. Orsman's Mission in Golden Lane, city.

f) Richmond Street Mission and Sunday-schools, Walworth.

g) Greenwalk Mission, Bermondsey.

h) Mr. Hampton's Blind Mission.

i) Mrs. Thomas's Mother's Mission.

j) Tabernacle Sunday-school, with 1,000 children in regular attendance.

k) A country Mission.

l) Evangelist's Association.

m) A Loan Tract Society.

n) The Orphanages at Stockwell are among the most important institutions in Mr. Spurgeon's care. They were founded by a gift of one hundred thousand dollars from a friend of his, and are supported by the voluntary contributions and the revenue of the capital fund. Fatherless boys and girls are received between the ages of six and ten. Here they are taught and trained. Special efforts are being made to bring them

up in the fear of God and in the knowledge of the truth.

Mr. Spurgeon's relation to the inmates is one of tender intimacy. He finds great delight in this work, and the children love him. Mr. John B. Gough, the eminent temperance lecturer relates this incident in his book entitled "Sunlight and Shadow"—

"I would like to give you an incident to illustrate Mr. Spurgeon's greatness and simplicity: He wished me to visit his Boys' Orphanage at Stockwell. I could go only on Saturday, and his note to me was characteristic: 'Beloved friend,—Although I never go out on Saturdays, my horses, being under the law and not under grace, keep the seventh-day Sabbath, yet we will arrange to visit the orphanages,' etc.

"A beautiful day it was, for London, as we rode together chatting all the way. When we entered the grounds, the boys set up a shout of joy at the sight of their benefactor. I asked, 'What are the requirements for admission?' He said, 'Utter destitution. Nothing denominational. We have more of the Church of England than of the Baptists. We have Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists — all sorts.'

"After watching the gymnastic exercises of the boys, and after I had spoken a few words to them, Mr. Spurgeon said to me:

" 'Will you go with met o the infirmary? We have one boy who is very ill with consumption; he can not live, and I wish to see him, for he would be

disappointed if he knew I had been here and had not seen him.'

"We went into the cool, sweet chamber, and there lay the boy. He was very much excited when he saw Mr. Spurgeon. The great preacher sat by his side, and I cannot describe the scene. Holding the boy's hand in his, he said:

"'Well, my dear, you have some precious promises in sight all round the room. Now, dear, you are going to die, and you are very tired lying here, and soon you will be free from pain, and you will rest. Nurse, did he rest last night?'

"'He coughed very much.'

"'Ah, my dear boy, it seems very hard for you to lie here all day in pain, and cough at night. Do you love Jesus?'

"'Yes.'

"'Jesus loves you. He bought you with His precious blood, and He knows what is best for you. It seems hard for you to lie here and listen to the shouts of the healthy boys outside at play. But soon Jesus will take you home, and then He will tell you the reason and you will be so glad.'

"Then laying his hand on the boy, without the formality of kneeling, he said:

"'O Jesus, Master, this dear child is reaching out his thin hand to find Thine. Touch him, dear Saviour, with Thy loving, warm clasp. Lift him as he passes the cold river, that his feet be not chilled by the water of death; take him home in Thine own good time. Comfort and cherish him till that good

time come. Show him Thyself as he lies here, and let him see Thee, and know Thee more and more as his loving Saviour.'

"After a moment's pause, he said:

"'Now, dear, is there anything you would like? Would you like a little canary in a cage, to hear him sing in the morning? Nurse, see that he has a canary to-morrow morning. Good-bye, my dear; you will see the Saviour, perhaps, before I shall.'

"I have seen Spurgeon hold by his power sixty-five hundred persons in a breathless interest; I knew him as a great man universally esteemed and beloved; but as he sat by the bedside of a dying pauper child whom his beneficence had rescued, he was to me a greater and grander man than when swaying the mighty multitude at will."

o) The Pastor's College is another institution to which Mr. Spurgeon devotes much attention. It is a sort of "school of prophets". It was the first important institution begun by him, and it is still his favorite. The Pastor's College began in 1856. Mr. Spurgeon says of it:

"When it was commenced, I had not even a remote idea of whereunto it would grow. There were springing up around me, as my own spiritual children, many earnest young men, who felt an irresistible impulse to preach the Gospel, and yet their want of education would be a sad hindrance to them. It was not in my heart to bid them cease their preaching, and had I done so, they would in all probability have ignored my recommendation. As it seemed that

preach they would, though their attainments were very slender, no other course was open but to give them an opportunity to educate themselves.

"The Holy Spirit very evidently had set his seal upon the work of one of them, by conversions wrought under his open-air addresses; it seemed therefore a plain matter of duty to instruct this youthful Apollos still further, that he might be fitted for wider usefulness. No college at that time appeared to me to be suitable for the class of men that the providence and grace of God drew around me. They were mostly poor, and most of the colleges involved necessarily a considerable outlay to the student. . . . . Moreover it must be frankly admitted that my views of the Gospel and of the mode of training preachers were and are somewhat peculiar. . . . . It seemed to me that preachers of the grand old truths of the Gospel, suitable for the masses, were more likely to be found in an institution where preaching and divinity would be the main object, and not degrees and other insignia of human learning."

These considerations led him to begin with a few tried young men, whom he placed under the care of an experienced and capable minister. He found the right man in Mr. George Rogers, a man of Puritanic stamp, deeply learned, orthodox, judicious. The work began in Mr. Roger's house.

From the first the pastor maintained the College from his own purse, although the number of students rapidly enlarged. The immense sale of his sermons,

together with the practical economy of his wife, he asserts, enabled him to spend between three and four thousand dollars in this delightful work. But suddenly this source of income dried up, like Elijah's "brook Cherith". Mr. Spurgeon, namely, had taken occasion to speak in bold denunciation of the institution of slavery then existing in the United States. This brought on a reaction against him, and he was confronted with a serious interference with his plans. He even proposed to sell his horse and carriage, but his friends would not hear of it. Then he told his faithful congregation of his difficulty, and they began to support the College by weekly offerings. However, this proved at first a meager source of income. Just then, when he reached his extremity, an unknown lady sent him one thousand dollars, to be used in educating young men for the ministry. He says:*

"How did my heart leap for joy! I threw myself then and thenceforth upon the bounteous care of the Lord, whom I desired with my whole heart to glorify by this effort."

Soon afterward the Tabernacle congregation adopted the institution, and cared for it. The contributions steadily increased, till in the year 1869, the amount reached exactly £1,869 (equal to $9,345). The number of students ranges from eighty to one hundred. This institution has been a great blessing, and is prosperous at the present time.

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* Needham's Life and Labors of C. H. Spurgeon.

LITERARY LABORS.

It remains to refer to Mr. Spurgeon's literary labors, which have been very abundant. One would think that a man with such a congregation to minister to, and with such a system of institutions to superintend, would be more than busy. And so he would be, were he any body but C. H. Spurgeon. But Spurgeon has nevertheless found time to do a remarkable amount of literary work.

Twenty years ago, Mr. Spurgeon began the publication of "The Sword and Trowel", a monthly magazine of sterling merit. It is personally conducted by Spurgeon on a rather unique plan, and contains stirring editorials, brief spiritual sermons, spicy lectures, and helpful instructions for Christian workers. Its readers are very numerous, among all denominations, both in England and America.

For twenty years he also edited and published annually, a volume of his sermons which have had a wide sale in book form.

Almost every minister has his great masterpiece, "The Treasury of David" in seven fine volumes, which is beyond compare the most excellent exposition of the Psalms, ever attempted or produced by an uninspired pen. For generations to come, men will be grateful to Charles H. Spurgeon, for writing that work.

At the same time he has been a constant contributor to the press of the day, conducted book reviews, and has carried on a voluminous private correspond-

ence. Then there are his "John Ploughman's Talks" which are full of the quaintest and most original home talks to common people. One is led to wonder how he succeeds in doing so many things, and doing them all with such remarkable ability, skill and adaptedness, but the Lord has cut Charles H. Spurgeon from no common mould, and we would not advise any one to conclude that his case belies the common rule, "Jack of all trades and master of none." He is simply an exception to the rule. Common folks had better not attempt to follow him. Besides in all this his motives are transparent. He simply seeks to serve the Lord with all his powers, and in *that* we may all follow his example.

In every thing that Spurgeon says and does, he displays conspicuously that rarest of all mental virtues, common-sense. He clings closely to old-fashioned orthodoxy in his theological belief, and stands like a rock amid the shifting sands of liberalism which are "carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." He expressed himself thus in an inaugural address in 1881:

"Just now we much need faith in the form of *fixity of belief*. I just now heard one of you say to another, 'How broad you get'! Well, we do widen out; but not as some men, for we are not of the broad school who believe little or nothing aright, because they desire to believe everything. We have cast our anchor; it has taken a firm grip; we have ceased to drift; we remain at rest. Some men have no creed;

or if they have, it is altered so often that it is no use to them. Modern creeds are like the clothes of Italian peasants, which I have gazed upon with wondering inquiry. It would puzzle the most learned geologist to discover the primary foundation of a pair of trousers, which have been patched and mended with cloth of all patterns and colors, from generation to generation. Such and so varied are some men's beliefs and unbeliefs; an agglomeration of philosophic rags, metaphysical tatters, theological remnants and heretical cast-offs."

Within the last year a great struggle took place between him and the liberalizing element in the Baptist Church. He rebuked the current laxity of belief with his characteristic force, and withdrew from the "Baptist Union", a ministerial association, because he would not be persuaded to join what he called the "Down Grade" movement in theological circles. The rumor was rife at one time, that he would abandon the denomination and set up for himself, but he spurned the very thought; "Spurgeonism" he will not hear of.

If we had any fault to find with Mr. Spurgeon in doctrinal matters, it would be the fact that he advocates the doctrines of Calvinism. He is a Calvinist on all occasions and at every opportunity. He does not mince matters. But this is only an insignificant spot on the broad bright disc of his wonderful usefulness.

Of late years Spurgeon has suffered greatly from that painful malady, gout. It drives him into the

country almost every year for rest. Often he is compelled to sit in his chair while delivering his sermons.

Recently the rumor has gained currency that he would resign his charge. Referring to this rumor he said:

"No idea of giving up my beloved work has crossed my mind of late. When the Lord sends the manifest successor, the original worker will cheerfully give way; but why should he do so while as yet his years are only forty-five, and he is no worse in health than he has been wont to be, but on the contrary has had a better year than usual?"

The question is frequently and naturally asked, Wherein lies the great power of Mr. Spurgeon as a preacher? A writer says: "This can not be answered without taking into account his entire make-up. His body is built for all the effort and endurance of a public preacher. He is a stout man of medium height; his neck heavy, his chest broad, his face round, his mouth wide, his manners plain, his gesticulation rather quiet. His mind is endowed with a wonderful combination of attributes. His conception of what he wants to say is as clear as a sunbeam. He reads human nature at a glance, and can adapt his style to his audience at will. This was finely illustrated when he preached to a large congregation of London criers and coster-mongers upon a certain occasion, in Golden Lane. After the service the delighted, excited children of nature exclaimed as one met the other: "Wonderful!" "Wot a voice!" "Stunnin'!" "I never!" "Would make a foine coster!"

"Wit, pathos, illustration, wisdom, rebuke, exposition, warning, all come at his command and go when he pleases to dismiss them. He never performs as a holy mountebank, is never vulgar, and never imitates any one else. Then he has a most retentive memory. As to the choice of language, he is greatly enamored of the terse, nervous English of the old Puritan writers. He is said to have read 'Pilgrim's Progress' through about one hundred times. Says he: 'The more I read it, the more I wonder at Bunyan's power. Of all Christian writers, I rank him next to the Apostle Paul.' Then his soul is imbued with Bible truth. Language to him is simply a hammer, a means to an end. His imagination fires, his heart glows, and he preaches what he believes, in the simplicity of clear thought, and the beauty of easy figures and pure words. He talks like a full-grown man to men whom he must meet at the bar of God."